

# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

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## I.

THE castle of Carrigadroghid occupies a unique position, being built upon a rocky ledge rising from the bed of the Lee which winds past through a typical Munster scene. I should never have beheld its squared stone chimneys or dismantled gable-ends if a chance journey to southern Ireland had not resulted in a meeting with my old friend Bob Speedwell, who insisted on my spending a few days at a cottage he was then renting near this lovely and secluded spot.

The first day of my visit passed agreeably with rod and creel, but on our return to Fern Lodge a letter awaited my friend which, he explained, would detain him in the neighbouring town of Macroom for some hours next day. Desirous of saving Mrs. Speedwell the task of entertaining me and keeping an eye to the devastations of a clumsy girl who burlesqued the duties of a cook, I volunteered to accompany Bob on his drive and try my luck back along the Lee.

Accordingly, after an early breakfast next morning, we set off through the fresh air, riotous with the song of the larks, to a point close upon the bridge approaching the village of Macroom, where we parted. "Good luck, old fellow," said Bob. "I'll be back

before dinner. Try the black gnat I tied yesterday, and don't delude all the fishes clean out of the water by showing them those London beauties of yours;" my cheery friend holding the tinselled contents of my fly-book in the utmost contempt, as delusions and snares for the sportsman alone.

There had been promise of a cloudy day when we started, but before I had thrown the first cast the sun was blazing in the intense blue of an Irish sky. The sport was not so good as on the previous day and my interest in it soon waned; but I consoled myself with the reflection that few unsuccessful anglers are blessed with such scenery. It was close on noon when I caught sight of the gables of Carrigadroghid again. Leisurely reeling up my line, I determined to halt here and while away an hour beside this grim relic of the old strenuous times of siege and foray. Unjointing my rod, I flung myself upon a bank connected by an isthmus of sand with the island on which the castle stands, and leaned back, my hat over my eyes, trying to reconstruct the past from the legends Bob Speedwell had gathered among the peasantry round: how it was built to satisfy the caprice of some dead and gone Una O'Carroll; how Broghill besieged it, hanging Egan, the Bishop of Ross, before the

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walls, because he urged the defenders against surrender; and how, finally, "the fellow in the laced coat" took it by the stale device of trundling up mock cannon under the noses of its astute garrison. Poor old tower, how sturdily it still stood above the careless water that mirrored its ruin now as once it mirrored its glory, the battlements gone, the window, whence Una's lovely face looked forth in the dim long ago on grazing kine and swelling pasture, a fissure in the battered wall! We English are not a sentimental folk; but I think that for a moment the pathetic desolation of those fire-blackened stones, which had known so many human joys and human sorrows, impressed me more deeply than it is ever likely to impress even those who probably were descendants of the men who once held sway here; a country lad cleaning his master's cart hard by, or a slouching untidy matron lounging down the bank for water, her black hair tumbling about her ears, her new wedding-ring glittering in the sunlight as she swung her brazen pail.

With the intention of examining the place more closely I rose and sauntered across to the bridge, half ancient, half modern, where the narrow past and wider present seem to meet before the postern opening on it from the castle. This entrance was, however, barred by a rude door covered with weather-stained advertisements, but so rickety that pushing it aside a little I was able to look beyond. There was not much to see; only a floor cumbered by a fallen roof, a portion of a broken stairway up the wall, and a pencil of light striking in through a half-blocked window. I looked at my watch and was turning away to seek some fresh distraction, when I found myself face to face with a lady who evidently had crossed the

bridge from the opposite side, and had come quite close before I was aware of her presence. Involuntarily stepping back that she might go by, I lifted my hat and was about to pass on, reluctantly, for the face she turned to me was, and is still to my thinking, the most beautiful I ever beheld. Instead of advancing she paused and said, with bird-like flutter in her voice: "Pardon me, sir, but the door, is it open?"

I regretted to say that it was not.

"Ah, how unfortunate!" She spoke English with a decidedly French accent, making a little gesture of disappointment.

"If we inquire at those cabins," I said after an awkward interval, during which I resumed my hat, "we should get some information about the place, though there is not much to be seen. The whole building is dilapidated; the floor seems covered with rubbish."

She nodded, and then turning back, we walked together towards the few houses built near the angle formed by the intersection of the road over the bridge with that leading to Macroom. "I trust," observed the lady, "that I do not trouble you; but I wish to see the interior so much."

I assured her that it was no inconvenience, inwardly blessing the fate which had thrown such a diversion in my way, while I devoutly hoped she was not one of a party, and instinctively glanced round across the bridge fearing to see the ubiquitous car and its attendant driver. "I came from over the hill," said the lady, interpreting my look.

"From Coachford?" I observed, proud of my local knowledge.

She smiled: "Oh, no, a little beyond it."

We had now reached one of the houses and in answer to my inquiries were directed to another where the key of the castle was kept. After a

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characteristic delay, the custodian, an old woman, was found, and under her guidance we retraced our steps, my companion glancing around her on every side, and talking of the various objects which met her eye; now it was the increase of the ivy on one of the northern gables, now the size of some ash-stems which leaped from the midmost buttress of the bridge. "They are quite great trees now," she said; "and yet, if you were to have seen what little twigs they were once!"

"Their growth must have been very rapid of late years," I ventured, looking down over the parapet.

"Oh, no," she replied, laughing deliciously, "quite the contrary, I think."

I was surprised into staring at her, but youth was instinct in every movement. Her figure was about the middle height and admirably proportioned, with perhaps a slight inclination to plumpness; her dress too, as well as I can recollect, was quite fashionable, being in the prevailing mode called Directorate. I had seen just such another gown on Mrs. Speedwell the previous evening.

The old woman who had hobbled on before us opened the door and stood waiting. Entering we found ourselves in an irregular enclosure about thirty feet each way. The lady ceased speaking, and crossing the threshold with a quick, assured step, looked about her, a lovely figure in the subdued light. She went to an angle formed by the walls immediately facing the river, and peered upward. "Ah," she cried, "how it goes, year by year, and gives no sign, until some fine morning, crash, it all comes down! That is the way of ruins; they seem always the same till one day comes a storm and, *pouf*, your old castle disappears. The steps are gone that used to be here," she continued, glancing along the wall.

"Look, you can see their impressions yet in the mortar; but there are a few remaining near that narrow little window where the light comes in. The view from it must be very pretty." She pointed to a lancet-shaped slit in the wall perhaps fourteen feet above our heads.

"Och, sure, miss, if ye'd like we could get a ladder," observed the guardian readily. "There's one convaniant at Jerry Downey's." The lady thanked her with a bright smile and came to the door. "I will get it," I volunteered, starting forward. "Oh, no, sir, sure he'll bring it himself; I'll go meself an' tell him," replied the woman, and she limped away, the other thanking her again with a graceful condescension quite different from her manner towards me. Then going to one of the lower windows, she gazed out upon the even flow of the Lee. "How unchanging it is!" she said after a pause. "Nothing seems to matter; *tout lasse, tout passe, tout casse*. Look at the great white cows standing in the water as if it was only yesterday. You are a philosopher, sir; it is the fashion," she added, turning to me with an easy imperious confidence which I have omitted to say lay behind all the suavity of her manner. "Can you tell me what is Time?"

Now I am a plain man, without any predilection for philosophical discussions, which honestly I consider a waste of breath; for prove what you will, annihilate your adversary as you may, the question in dispute remains much the same as before. It is like shooting at the moon with an eighty-ton gun; you raise a dust, make a stir, and end by leaving the moon where you found her—in the air. Besides, beautiful as my chance acquaintance was, I did not relish being catechised in the half negligent tone she assumed. Accordingly I

answered a little stiffly, that my time had been too much taken up by the practical affairs of life to leave me any wide margin for inquiring into its nature. "And I have been given to understand, madam," I concluded, "that the efforts of those who have devoted their lives to such studies have not been crowned by any tangible success."

"Ah, I see," she rejoined gaily, casting a fragment of mortar into the river. "*Le raisonnement en bannit la raison*. You are practical, like your great nation; an Englishman I presume? Yes, I thought so from the first; you have a more erect air than the people about here. They look conquered. Well, so they are and so they deserve to remain; though still, they came very near shaking you off once, but fate and the wind fought for you—ah, here they come!"

She ceased as we heard footsteps approaching, and presently the old woman reappeared accompanied by a man carrying a ladder. This being raised against the wall, not without much discussion and gesticulation, my companion mounted swiftly and looked out through the window I mentioned; then she descended, had the ladder shifted to another place, and examined the walls themselves here and there as if to test their solidity, taking up a new position some minutes after, moving from point to point with what appeared to me the aimless curiosity of the sight-seer. I had at first offered to hold the ladder, and now continued to do so, as well as assist in carrying it to the spots she indicated; while the woman and the man watched us, a deferential smile on their lips which nothing but what I must call the native good breeding of the Irish could have restrained from breaking into a grin, as the lady prosecuted her search, and I, shamefacedly

enough, no doubt, played second fiddle; for I think a man always looks foolish obeying the behests of a woman when he does not clearly understand what she is about. In this case too there was really little need for holding the ladder; it was short enough and there was no danger of a serious fall. I had not the faintest idea of what she meant by acting thus; and although she was undeniably very bewitching I began to think of a decent excuse to get out of my rather ridiculous position. For the second or third time she had the ladder brought back under the window she had observed first; and she was in the act of descending when she uttered a little, low cry, stopped short and glanced down over her shoulder. I looked up, one hand on the ladder, the other holding my watch; then she burst into a very genuine laugh. "A thousand pardons, sir," she exclaimed in French. "I have been extremely selfish; pray forgive me!"

I had once stayed for some weeks in Paris, and, guessing at her meaning, assured her in my best French that it was of no matter; and had it been my busiest day instead of my idlest, I should have said the same, for a lovelier face, especially when she smiled, no woman ever lifted in the sunlight. She laughed again, and began to pick hastily at some stones directly under the embrasure of the window, muttering to herself in rapid, disjointed words, and then said aloud: "This is very stiff, lend me your sword. Oh, I forget, excuse me." She looked round again and added, still in French, "That woman yonder is watching me; make her go away for a few moments." She was impatient now and much agitated. I left the ladder, and addressing the woman drew her outside with some trivial inquiries concerning the ex-

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terior of the building. I kept her occupied thus some minutes, fully conscious that she was scrutinising me keenly, though at the time I could not guess why. She had those piercing, intelligent eyes one often meets among the older women of the Irish peasantry, and I had noted too that, although her manner was deferential, she had not the abashed bearing of the "bhoy" in the presence of his superiors.

After a short pause the lady came to the postern and called to me, still speaking French: "Sir, you are really too kind, but there is something here, a—*a souvenir*, I wish to take away, but it is so tightly wedged between the stones I cannot get it out. I do not wish this woman to know, and if I had a knife, broad-bladed, I could extract it myself; no, not that," as I produced my penknife; "it would break. How unfortunate! What o'clock is it?" I told her, she actually stamped her foot with impatience.

Suddenly a bright thought struck me. "I have a fishing-rod," I said. "It is on the bank, quite near; I will go and fetch it." I would have hurried away, but she cried out in almost agonised tones, "No, no, do not leave me; send the woman." Much mystified, I turned to our guide and told her where to find the rod; but catching sight of the man who had brought the ladder crossing the road, I shouted my directions to him, for I was ashamed to send an old woman on such an errand. Together we re-entered the castle, the lady apologising in English for the trouble she gave and questioning the woman about the different families in the immediate neighbourhood. She mentioned one name I had heard of the evening before; its owner was an acquaintance of Bob, a wonderful traveller, he had said, and rarely at home.

"Do they live here still?" asked the lady.

"Indeed they do, ma'am," replied the other; "an' they're here now many and many a long day, an' good people they are too."

"What is the Christian name of the present man?"

"Stephen, ma'am, or, I should say, miss."

"Ah, indeed, the old one," continued the lady unheeding. "Strange" she added, turning to me, "how names are handed down from father to son. That name has been in the family, I dare swear, for more than a hundred years. They live at Hauteville?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"The present man, is he married?"

"Och, no, ma'am, he's young yet; he's always travelling, though he's at home now. I see him goin' to Macroom an hour ago."

"Does he keep many servants?"

"Wisha, no, only a cook an' the parlour-maid, an' she's sick down with her mother in the village. 'Tis a fine life they have; nothing to do but look after the house, an' everything provided, not as if they were on board-wages. I suppose you know the family, ma'am?"

"Yes," said the lady, "I know the family."

Jerry had now returned with the rod, and taking it I offered to dig out the object of her search, some variety of lichen or fern as I imagined. She thanked me graciously though she did not accept my assistance; then quickly mounting the ladder and rapidly loosening with the spike of my rod a few moss-covered stones which fell clattering to my feet, I saw her pause, look round a second, and swiftly take a small packet from the slight cavity thus revealed. She lingered a little while and then descended, holding a spray of a small, fern-like plant, exclaiming with an air of triumph: "See,

I have got it; the *asplenium trichomanes*! A very good specimen too."

As we stepped out upon the bridge again a few drops of rain touched our faces; the sun was hidden by a passing cloud. The old woman, who seemed to be telling her beads under her apron, now approached us, and seeing that my companion made no motion to her pocket, I gave her a little gratuity for herself and the man who had shambled back to work. The lady had turned away over the bridge and signalled me to follow her by a slight beck, while with a wave of her hand she bade farewell to the woman. To my astonishment, however, the latter, instead of locking the door, darted past me and approaching her uttered some guttural words in Irish. A shadow of deep displeasure crossed the lady's haughty face, but nevertheless she answered in what, I presume, was also Irish. Then followed an almost whispered colloquy, the lady moving backward slowly as if she wished to be as brief as possible, and holding a finger to her lips when she was not speaking.

Feeling a little awkward, I walked on, adjusting my rod, and in a moment my companion was at my side.

"You must come and have some refreshment," she said cordially. "What a strange old place that is! I know every stone in the walls. Come this way, so, over the stile, *merci*! We shall soon find shelter, though there is little need; the rain will soon pass off. Look, is not that lovely?"

We were on high ground now and she pointed to the scene below, lit by the sun as he poured his beams athwart the falling rain until it resembled a shower of gold. "Ah," she said, drawing a deep breath, "I have often beguiled many a weary hour here; it reminded me of the Loire, the blue slates on the houses. It is an unfortunate country, sir, is it not?

Beautiful in spite of its hard conditions for its people. You English have your looks, its very life-blood."

"On the contrary, madam," I replied a little stiffly, "we have lost more than we have gained by our connection with the island; ever since the Union we have had more trouble than profit by it."

"Excellent!" she cried, lifting her eyebrows, and showing her small, white teeth, but rather as if she were applauding a bit of good acting than approving a sentiment. "The Union," she went on, "ah, yes, it was in the air a long time; you have no one like Mr. Pitt now, I fancy. Oh, it was planned! Do the Irish plot to beat the French here still, and stone them when they come?"

I laughed outright. "There is no chance of that," I answered; "the ports are too well guarded. But the people have all reasonable liberty; they can leave the country if they choose, and are doing so in droves."

"Then they never fight now?"

"Only, as usual, among themselves; our soldiers are frequently engaged in keeping their rival factions asunder. But to fight with us would be madness; we have thirty thousand men in the place, besides the police, Irishmen too."

"Thirty thousand men!" she echoed. "And General Bonaparte had little more to conquer Piedmont and Lombardy! I begin to respect those people again." She put her finger to her lips and walked on. "Ah, I see now," she continued; "your method is better than the old plan of massacring them at intervals. You squeeze the country gradually, as they say the boa-constrictor squeezes his prey; at first the victim struggles, but soon it is all over. Yes, the modern way is better; it is quieter, and that is a great gain."

Now I am, I hope, a perfectly fair, open-minded man: I am accustomed

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terior of people of varying views and occupied their opinions, even when opposed to my own, in a spirit of toleration; but I confess to have been unprepared for such astounding ignorance or prejudice. I knew, moreover, something of the methods employed to foment patriotic agitation in the most distressful country, and I had scarcely patience to add politely: "I fear, madam, your sympathies have been imposed upon; you have not, evidently, seen our side of the question."

She shook her head with an airy laugh that dissolved my momentary irritation. "Ah, sir, but I have seen your side of the question. I have had excellent opportunities of arguing for myself; you cannot have changed much since,—*Allons!* We are arrived."

She pointed to a small country house close at hand, snugly ensconced in a grove which protected it on the north. "Come in, and allow me to offer you a little hospitality; it is the least I can do in return for all your patience and courtesy."

As she spoke we skirted a low wall tipped by laurels, and passing through a swing gate, found ourselves on a gravel path leading up to the door between the box-edged borders of an old-fashioned garden glowing with roses that lifted their beauty to the sun and breathed forth their perfume, as if in thanksgiving for the sweet shower that had starred their petals and sunk, cool and refreshing, to their roots. My companion paused a moment, drawing a deep sigh, so profound, so utterly pitiful, that I pray God I may never hear the like again. A richly-tinted clump of columbine detained her a moment, as she gathered a handful of its fantastic flowers. Then, running lightly up the steps before the door standing hospitably open, she bade me welcome to Hauteville.

"There need be no ceremony," she said, as we ascended the stairs; "I know the ways of the place, as the Irish say." On the first landing, however, she paused irresolutely between two doors at right angles, and then impulsively opened one, entering the room it led into with a step which grew more assured as she advanced. The apartment was bright, cheerful, and comfortably furnished, though in a bygone fashion. Motioning me to a seat, she walked round the room, daintily touching a table here, a chair there, opening a cabinet or other knick-knack, uttering every now and then little exclamations of surprise and interest just as she had done in the ruin; then checking herself, she approached the chimney-piece where, among other things, was a silver bell. This she rang impatiently, I thought afterwards, and, with an apology to me, seated herself at a little recess near one of the windows.

Presently we heard steps on the stair outside and a fat, round-eyed girl made her appearance.

"Ah, here you come at last," said my companion. "Why did you not go to the door when we arrived?"

"Sure, I didn't know you were here at all, ma'am," replied the abigail, evidently impressed by her interlocutor's authoritative manner. "I was in the kitchen."

"But that is just near the stairs."

"Oh, law, no, ma'am; it's at the top of the house indeed, ma'am."

My hostess made a little gesture of impatience. "That is Mr. Stephen's doing?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am, he had it put there a year ago."

"Well, he is master and can do as he wills. Are you engaged here?"

"No, ma'am, I'm only takin' care of the house; I go away at night."

"Your master is in Macroom?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"So, now get us something to eat. I am Lady ——," she mentioned the family name. "But where is the cook?"

"Oh, the cook is in Cork, ma'am, but she'll be back soon; she left the keys out, for fear anybody would call."

The girl jerked the words out automatically and then stood staring straight before her. The lady shrugged her shoulders. "I comprehend," she said slowly. "Stay, I will go with you and get what I want; I know where it should be. Pardon, sir, a moment."

She vanished with the girl, and, leaning back in my chair, I suffered my eyes to wander over the room. It was spacious, and must have run the entire length of the house. Its windows, enlarged and modernised, contrasted very favourably with the low, many-paned variety I noted in other parts of the establishment. The paintings which adorned it were mostly time-worn. Over the fireplace hung a spirited portrait of a full-blooded gentleman, dressed in the fashion of the eighteenth century. Time had cracked the scarlet of his coat and dimmed the light in his leering eyes; but the energy and distinction of his attitude, and the bold contour of the features, showed that in his day he must have been a bustling man of action, who probably, as occasion served, had hacked or intrigued his way to power among the mere Irishry. Near this picture was an unfinished sketch of a bridge by Canaletto, while here and there were other paintings, some poor, some passable, of ladies in sacks and furbelows. At my elbow was a portfolio containing some excellent photographic views which I had begun to examine idly, when a light step and the jingling of glasses caused me to look up; my hostess had returned,

bearing a tray with the materials of a tempting lunch upon it. In answer to my uncontrollable look of surprise, she said laughing: "I dared not trust those glasses to that clumsy girl; they are heirlooms; besides, I do not think she is accustomed to waiting on people, and I would prefer that we were *tête-à-tête*."

She had by this time, with my assistance, wheeled a little table near the window, and leaving me to arrange the tray, shut the door noiselessly. She paused too, I could see, before a small mirror to take off her great hat and pass her hand over her abundant hair, humming lightly as she did so. Then she took a chair, filled me out some wine, and poured a little for herself into a tapering glass which I was connoisseur enough to know must have been well-nigh priceless, so cunningly blended were its rainbow hues. She pressed me to eat and drink with the frank cordiality of a great lady who wishes to be gracious without becoming familiar, and kept up a conversation that sparkled like champagne in its flow of epigram and anecdote, though unfortunately I cannot recall a word of it now. Her own lunch, I could see, was, however, a mere pretence; and she watched me, in spite of all her courtesy, with the air of one who longs to speak on a subject lying near the heart. Seeing this, I gradually slackened my gastronomic efforts, though not without a slight regret, for the lunch was really excellent and deserved every consideration.

As I filled a second glass and leaned back, she said: "I see there is no clock here; would you kindly lay your watch upon the table? I have something to say and to do." I did as she asked, and sat watching her, inwardly wondering what would come next. She bent her face above the watch a few moments and then raised

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it to mine, her wondrous eyes filled with a pitiful look of entreaty that cut me to the heart. "Madam," I said, speaking slowly, for I feared the wine had mounted to my head, "I shall be only too happy to be of any service."

She bowed as if she had been waiting for the words, and replied: "You can, undoubtedly, sir, and what I require is not arduous."

I was younger then and more romantic than I am now, but I shall never repent of what I did; one hand lay on the table near my watch; I raised and kissed it. She looked at me with a slow puzzling smile that stole from mouth to eye; then she sighed again and glanced behind at the portrait over the mantelpiece. For a moment she seemed lost in thought, but, rousing herself, she drew from her breast the object I had seen her secrete there in the castle. It resembled nothing so much as a very small cartridge-case, and was evidently very old, the lacquered leather coming asunder in flakes around the corroded silver ornaments that once had adorned it. My companion examined the box carefully and then began to open it. The task did not prove an easy one; but at length, by passing a knife, at my suggestion, round the edges of the flap which had been ground and welded into the opposite side, she laid it open, and with the air of one who knows what to expect took out a packet wrapped in mouldering paper. This last broke away, and revealed within some closely folded parchment now yellow through time and exposure to damp.

I watched her with growing interest as she pushed aside the glasses and spread the document open upon the table, a document which seemed with its dim, quaint lettering and formal flourishes a legal instrument of some sort. The lady seemed, however, to find no difficulty in reading it, and

when she had finished nodded her dainty head two or three times at the writing, as if it were the face of an old friend. "So!" she said. "It is just as you left it, *mon ami*, only a little time-worn and a little late in the day." Then she raised her head eagerly as if recollecting my presence. "Sir," she cried, "you offered me your service a while ago; well, this is what I require of you; it is not very exacting. I wish you," raising the document, "to post this deed to an address, which I shall give you, in the town of Cork. I may not do so myself, and no one but you can help me. Say, will you do it?"

She spoke so eagerly and with such intense earnestness that I readily assented, though with a secret misgiving as to my companion's sanity. She sank back in her chair. "I thank you, sir," she replied, "and confide fully in the promise you have given me."

"It is a little thing, madam," I remarked when I had again pledged myself to act as she desired.

She shook her head. "There is nothing little in this life, sir," she answered. "That little thing of which you speak so lightly has been waiting nigh one hundred years to be accomplished." I felt my brain turning as she gazed upon me with those unfathomable eyes of hers. "What is it your English poet says?

There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

She rose, and, going to a desk standing open by one of the windows, began tranquilly to search it, while I, having received a glance of permission, endeavoured to decipher the crabbed writing and legal terms of the weather-stained relic on the table. I could understand that it was a deed of gift of some lands in the

barony of East Muskerry to one Sir Patrick O'Brien, having been made and provided so that the decree of outlawry against him should be revoked according to His Majesty's pleasure. Furthermore, the said Sir Patrick O'Brien was desired to place, or to cause this document to be placed in the hands of two solicitors in Cork on or before a certain date therein specified. If this were not done, the property would once more revert to the Crown.

I had barely finished perusing the deed when the lady returned bearing a large envelope. Taking the document she folded it carefully in its narrow box, enclosing both in the stout linen-lined paper. Then, putting writing materials before me, she bade me address it to two names in a certain street in Cork. When I had finished, she took my watch from the table and sank, with what was almost a groan, into a chair by the window. "I have little time to spend with you, sir," she said, "but enough to explain to you, so far as explanation is necessary, my conduct to-day. I ask your attention to what I am about to say, but first take possession of that envelope; it will be more secure." I did as she requested, and drew my chair near hers. Then she began the following narrative, looking alternately at the watch and the lovely scene which lay spread before the window.

"You saw by the date of that deed that it is nearly one hundred years old; and you have, I presume, seen the name in whose favour it has been drawn?" I bowed. "This gentleman," she continued, "belonged to the French forces, and those lands which are given him there were the mere wreck of a splendid patrimony lost by his ancestors through devotion to the Stuarts. Well, while invalidated in Paris owing to a wound received during the campaign under

Dumouriez in Belgium, this same Sir Patrick O'Brien was presented to a French lady, Stephanie de Liancourt. He soon professed a passionate attachment to her, which she returned, being then young, innocent, credulous, and confiding. It was the year of Jemmapes. The gentleman was still young but poor, and the lady, who had been left mistress of herself at too early an age, assisted him frequently with money. It is an old story. Her lover proved faithless, or she believed he did; and, having obtained a command in the new army of Italy, he departed quite suddenly from Paris to push his fortunes under General Bonaparte.

"With her heart hardened and her soul humiliated, this jilted girl faced the world. She disdained to pursue her lover with complaints or entreaties; indeed, being passably rich, she had many acquaintances who would have gladly become suitors, but she had ceased to believe in love. You can understand that, as she was an aristocrat, she had scant sympathies with the France which had risen on the ruins of the Bastille; and though her possessions were assured to her by those who ruled the destinies of the country, she determined to travel instead of retiring to her estates. Naturally, her thoughts turned to England. While there she met the man who afterwards became her husband. He was ambitious, needy, daring, and, as she found later on, as heartless as she believed herself to be. Being essentially a man of affairs, he soon gained her confidence by his judicious advice regarding her French estates, which she finally sold, and having married him she came to live in this very place.

"There never was perhaps a stranger marriage; there were no illusions on either side; there was no love. The result was natural. Both went their several ways: the man sought



power and rank, the twin deities of his soul; and the woman endeavoured to forget in insipid amusements the thoughts which burned in hers. You will admit it was not an enviable life.

"Well, as the years went by that woman's heart grew harder still. A dull, unreasoning hate rose up within her against the man whose summer love had brought her to this miserable plight, and she vowed revenge if ever occasion offered. Alas, Fate ordained that they should meet again.

"One day she received an urgent letter beseeching her to grant an assignation to an old friend at a certain place in the neighbourhood. She recognised the handwriting; it was his, and you can comprehend with what warring emotions she gave consent. They met at the appointed spot and looked once more into each other's eyes. They did not speak of love, though he with incredible folly, or impudence as she thought, alluded to the past and conjured her to help him by its memory, adding excuses and explanations of which she then took no account. It seemed he had, through some signal service rendered while abroad to a relative of Mr. Pitt, obtained a pardon for former misdeeds and the assurance of the undisturbed enjoyment of certain lands yet remaining to the Crown as gifts; the conditions being, however, that the document authorising this should be lodged before a specified day in Cork with two gentlemen who had been commissioned to receive it. Unfortunately, he compromised himself in the meantime by killing, at a chance encounter, a gentleman of position in the county, and therefore dared not enter the city until the affair should be adjusted. His prayer was that, as time pressed and the matter was so important, she should place the deed you see there in the hands of those solicitors."

The lady drew a long breath, looked at the watch again, and resumed in what I thought was a weaker voice.

"What would you have? It was a man pleading to a woman he had wronged, to a woman whose heart had grown as hard as a nether millstone. She promised, but never meant to keep her word. They parted then,—for ever. What became of him she knew not, but the deed remained where he had put it, where she knew he had hidden it lest it might be lost or destroyed in case of his arrest, until to-day. She went on with the old life, and the years passed; but gradually a pitiless longing, a hopeless regret took the place of gratified hatred. She began now to believe the explanations O'Brien had given at their last meeting of his seeming abandonment of her, though at the time she had deemed them clever lies; and the remembrance that now it was too late for reparation embittered still more her joyless days. Think of it, sir! Remorse gnawed hourly at her heart; she had no guiding star of love or faith to light the way; she had no place in her little world, and youth itself was departing! Let me be brief; in desperation she ended all one wild night from the parapet of Carrigadroghid bridge."

The reciter paused again and turned the watch listlessly in her hand.

"That is a long time ago now, but it seems as if it were only yesterday. The distance between the bridge and the water is not great, and it was less then than at other times, for the river was swollen by recent rains; but before she reached the yellow flood she had repented, and she fought for life. Her struggle was vain, but not her repentance. *Inter pontem et fontem misericordia Domini!* Next morning her body was found on some rocks not far distant, where even in

summer the river chafes in its narrow bed. Her husband gave it a magnificent funeral, and quickly married another wife. It is no matter. This day she was permitted to revisit the scene of her crime, and ease her tortured soul by carrying out the directions of him whom she had so basely betrayed. This could not be done without human assistance. Twice before in the century she attempted the task, but failed; to-day she has been successful, thanks to you. Yes, sir; *Stephanie de Liancourt*, the woman who has been nine hundred years dead and buried, speaks to you now and thanks you with the gratitude which only those can feel who may no longer help themselves."

Involuntarily I sprang to my feet; was she mad or was I? There she stood before me, a living, breathing woman, instinct with all that gracious loveliness which I have tried to describe. Never in all my waking hours have I seen, or shall I see anything so fair, so lovable again; a gift from the gods to the hearth and the home of the man who could win her; and yet she was no longer of this world! I strove to speak, but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. She approached and handed me my watch, for she had risen also. I took it mechanically. "Do not try to speak, sir," she said gently; "I understand." Nevertheless I forced some words from between my lips, what they were I cannot remember. She smiled, a tender pity in her unfathomable eyes, and held out her hand. "Adieu, sir," she murmured; "we must part now; but not for ever," she added, reading my thoughts, and an indescribable light coming over her face. "We shall meet again before you have said your last word to your King." I bent above the dainty hand, and then impelled by a resistless impulse moved

away. At the door, however, I dared to turn and look back; yes, there she still stood under the red-coated portrait, one finger on her lip and the light upon her face!

I groped my way down the stairs like a drunken man, and it was not until I reached the open air that I recovered my mental equilibrium. My fishing-rod was in my hand, but I had no recollection of taking it from the stand in the hall; my hat was on my head, but I did not remember putting it there. My watch showed me that the luncheon-hour at my friend's house was past. I felt in my pocket and drawing out the envelope I had received in such strange circumstances, determined to post it immediately, just as if it had been a matter of ordinary experience. Accordingly I trudged off to Coachford and there forwarded it to the given address, getting back in time for dinner.

## II

WHEN I rejoined my friends I found that Mrs. Speedwell had been busy all day long with a sickly child, and that possibly she did not resent my absence from lunch, while Bob himself had only just returned. Instinctively I endeavoured to banish the memory of my adventure by chatting with him over our after-dinner cigars on the topics of the hour; but fate seemed unpropitious, for the unconscious Bob began to expatiate on the achievements and character of the traveller who lived at Hauteville. "He'll be at home to-morrow," said he, "and you must make his acquaintance. It may be useful to you in many ways; and if you can get him to talk, it will be nearly as good as a tour round the world. I'll pilot you over there to-morrow after breakfast." The conversation then drifted away to other subjects, and I quietly deter-

mined that I would see the matter out and, if possible, probe the mystery to the bottom. Retiring soon after, I slept, contrary to my expectations, the dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

Next morning, disdaining the dog-cart, we strolled down over that bridge which was to me so memorable, taking almost the identical path my strange companion and I had followed the day before. "We'll go round by the road," said my friend; "it will be a little more formal, but there is a short cut across there," he added, indicating the direction with the stem of his pipe, "just by that stile."

Following the road, we skirted the field and plantation I had traversed, and soon found ourselves in front of the house where I had been a guest. Up to that moment I confess to a slight hope that my companion must have meant some other dwelling bearing the name of Hauteville; but no, there was the very place; there were the wicket through which I had passed, the blooming parterres of roses, the hospitable door, and the sunlit hall. As in a dream I followed Bob across the walk and heard him inquire for the owner; as in a dream I followed, when we were ushered into a bright breakfast-room on the ground-floor where the traveller and one or two other men were chatting over the remains of a late but substantial meal. The dogs, that lay here and there upon the skins covering the polished boards, raised their lazy heads to question our entry, but at a word from their master resumed their listless apathy. Bob, who knew the others, was received with a chorus of welcome, and I was presented formally to the company. The conversation which we had interrupted flowed on again, and I was forced to take part in it. They were fluent talkers those country squires, though the matter was not momentous or indeed specially

important. Our host was cosmopolitan and catholic in his tastes; he had touched life at many points, and furthermore had the art of discussing the subject in hand as if it were the only one he cared to converse on. He was still young, and had nothing of the languid affectations of speech or air that marked his companions. His face, remarkable rather than handsome, instantly suggested to me the portrait which I knew hung in the room above. There were the same keen eye, the same energy of attitude. Granting the portrait was that of an ancestor, the hereditary traits, which in the earlier and more troubled days had led the one to power and fortune, could be seen working out now through the love of travel and adventure in the descendant.

After a while the visitors took their departure, loitering along the walk in the brilliant sunshine and whistling to their dogs, our host going with them to the door. When he returned, we lounged by the window, talking of many common acquaintances, until, producing cigars, he proposed we should look over the stables and inspect a new polo-pony. We did so, spending altogether half an hour between them and the out-houses where he had some cows with astounding pedigrees. When we came back the conversation had drifted to painting, and he offered laughingly to show us his picture-gallery. "I keep the few things of value we have up-stairs," he said leading the way; "but you must not expect anything striking; only a few ladies in brocade and the venerated founder of Hauteville. We have got some miniatures, however, which you may care to see."

As I expected, he ushered us into the room where I had lunched on the previous day, and with a laugh pointed out to me the familiar paintings. He was in a gay mood and gave us

many a quaint chapter of family history, as well as cynical character-sketches of the different paint studies who seemed to frown back at him from their canvas pillories; for I could see that his good sense had not guarded him from affecting an indifference towards rank and lineage, even while his manners and his bearing proclaimed the influence of both. He finished his description opposite the gentleman over the fire-place. "Now," he said, putting his hands in his pockets and his head on one side, "there you have as thorough-paced a rascal as the eighteenth century produced. When he was only twenty-three he ran away with a friend's wife, and afterwards ran the friend through in Spring Gardens by way of reparation. He was a bad son and a bad brother; his one aim in life was his own advancement, and he sacrificed to attain it any principles he ever possessed. He broke faith with friend and foe alike; he had a heart of stone and a will of steel; his one virtue was courage, and allied to a brazen, unabashed assurance, it carried him triumphantly through many an awkward place. At the heel of the hunt he died, not on Tyburn, but here, a baronet, rich in lands and honours, the husband in succession of the two loveliest women of their day; and I dare say he was as faithless to them as he was to everybody else. We had a portrait of the last Lady —, a relative of Lord Broghill, the man who did Lord Muskerrey out of Blarney Castle in the preceding century; and like the rest of her family she was no fool. She kept a pretty close eye on the baronet, they say, and outlived him in the end. Her picture, however, got damaged irreparably; but we have a very fair miniature of the first wife. Let's have a look at her."

He turned to a fancifully-carved cabinet, and, unlocking it, drew out a

tray of small, circular leather cases; these he opened, and displayed a really valuable collection of miniatures from the pencil of more than one famous artist. The subjects were principally dead and gone beauties of the family, some of whom had trodden those very floors, ascended the stair outside, and passed forth one day never to return from their quiet resting-place beneath the elms in the churchyard beyond the hill. "Strange, I cannot find the Frenchwoman here," he said. "God only knows why she married him. There is quite a romance about her: she got drowned one evening in the Lee not many years after her marriage; and I have a shadowy memory of servants' talk about a ghost that used to haunt Carrigadroghid bridge below, in open daylight. Ah, I remember now; it's in the desk. I had it out yesterday; there is something wrong with the clasp."

He approached the writing-desk I had seen the previous day whence my hostess had taken the envelope, and turning on his heel, muttered an oath. "As sure as I stand here, that girl goes to-day," he said addressing us. "Just look at this! A man cannot leave anything unlocked near their curious paws." Lifting one of the covers, he showed a mass of envelopes and note-paper tossed about in woeful confusion; but at the top I saw, framed in gold and lying open on the withered sprays of columbine, an exquisitely finished miniature of Stephanie de Liancourt, looking a little more girlish than when I had met her. Repressing his annoyance, our host took up the little painting and pointed out to us its beauties. The artist was, I believe, Fragonard; and he had caught with wonderful precision the matchless air of distinction I have alluded to, and fixed the radiant smile that must have made her the petted queen of many a *salon*.

"She had an old affair with a former lover, a Rapparee," said Bob's friend, gazing appreciatively on the gracious face, "and used to give him assignations. It is quite probable that she met her fate at his hands."

"Not at all, sir," I cried. "She threw herself from the bridge. There was another lover, but there was nothing dishonourable."

Both men stared at me. "And pray may I ask how you know?" asked our host with a touch of ice in his tones.

"She told me so herself, in this very room, yesterday," I answered.

Neither laughed as I expected. "Indeed?" observed our host with polite interest.

"Yes," I continued, wishing I had not spoken, but unable to keep silence.

"Those withered flowers were placed there by her yesterday; I can show you the clump outside where she plucked them. I,—I lunched with her here. I want to say,—I wish you to understand, that of all the women belonging to your family, there was not one purer or more unhappy. Her life was wrecked through a miserable misunderstanding; and whatever her faults have been, she has since expiated them."

My host looked at me thoughtfully and pulled the ears of a favourite setter that had cautiously ventured into this forbidden apartment in our wake.

"I would prefer you laughed," I said lamely.

"I have no desire to do so," he answered. "I have learned enough of the world to know that the improbable, as well as the unexpected, happens."

"Will you do me the favour of calling your servant, and we shall put the matter to rest?"

He stepped backward with a quick stride, and in Irish fashion called, "Hetty, Hetty!"

"Yes, sir," piped a distant voice.

"Come here at once." Steps sounded on the stairs, and the girl who had answered the bell the day before, made her appearance again. I advanced. "This gentleman wishes to speak to you," said her master. The girl turned to me.

"Do you remember," I began with a sinking heart, for her face expressed no recognition, "do you remember that I called here yesterday, accompanied by a lady who spoke to you and got lunch from you?"

"I don't, sir."

A cold perspiration burst forth upon my forehead. "Think," I continued, "I was sitting at that side of the room, and you said the master was in Macroom and the cook in Cork; and,—and—the kitchen had been put to the top of the house. Don't you recollect?"

"Indeed then I don't, sir; I never laid eyes on you in my born days until now. I didn't see any lady here at all, at all; though what you say about the house is right enough."

I stared hard at her, but she met my glance unflinchingly. Truth-telling is the virtue of an unimaginative people, and the Irish are not wanting in imagination; but I had not expected this, even in Ireland. Either the girl was the most consummate actress who ever played a part, or I was the victim of a jugglery of eye and ear unparalleled in the history of hallucination. It was impossible, I told myself, that I could have been mistaken; she was identically the same girl but a little less sleepy-looking than the day before. Turning my head I saw Speedwell's anxious face at my shoulder.

"Did you go near that desk?" asked the master after an awkward pause.

"No, sir, I never did such a thing,"

replied the girl proudly, with unmistakable signs of coming tears.

"That will do; you may go."

We went back into the room, and my host began to chat of other things; but I noticed that his voice and Bob's had grown graver, and that, when they addressed me, they did so in a deferential tone which annoyed me unspeakably. Another man would probably have dismissed the subject, but I clung to it. The owner of Hauteville behaved splendidly. Not only did he continue affecting to take me seriously, but he patiently wrote out at my suggestion an account of what had taken place, with the exception of the incident of the deed, which I felt that I could not refer to without breaking confidence. I described minutely the coloured glasses from which I had drunk; and after a search they were found, carefully put away in a cabinet opened by the cook's keys, that functionary playing the part of housekeeper in the establishment. I had, too, one grain of comfort in the fact that my host seemed impressed by the position of the miniature on the flowers.

When we took our departure, Bob proposed that we should return to his house by a much more circuitous route than that by which we had come; but I insisted on crossing the bridge, and by rare good luck we found my old guide of the previous day, in attendance on a party of tourists who were killing half an hour by gazing at the ruined walls of Una's castle. When they had gone, I hastened after the woman, as she hurriedly put the key in her pocket and turned away evidently desirous of avoiding me, and brought her to an abrupt halt. "Look here, Bob," I cried; "you may think what you like of my story, but there is the woman who, of her own accord, questioned the lady on this bridge.

Do you remember me?" I said addressing her.

"I do, of course, your honour."

"Thank God! Do you recollect the foreign-looking lady who was with me?"

"What lady, your honour?"

"The woman to whom you spoke in Irish."

She glanced from me to Bob and blessed herself. "Yeh, the Lord between us an' harm! That was no woman; 'twas a banshee!"

"How did you know?"

"Yeh, 'tisn't for the likes of me to be talking of them things to the likes of you, sir; but sure she had no shadow."

"No shadow!"

"No; don't you remimber she kept in the shade of the wall, an' only kem out whenever the sun was behind a cloud? Maybe you didn't, for you were lookin' at her face all the time, an' small blame to you," she added, the triumph of her sex twinkling in her sunken eyes.

"No shadow!" I echoed. "Good Heaven, I took her hand in mine; it was as real as your own."

The woman smiled pityingly. "Sure you thought that, sir; you felt and saw as she willed. When I strike that stone," she continued, touching one of the moss-patched slabs on the parapet of the bridge with her crooked fingers, "I feel it hard an' real, don't I? Well, if it wasn't there at all but only an image of it, an' if I felt it hard an' cold to my hand all the same, wouldn't it be real to me?"

"Egad, we're in for a lecture on metaphysics," cried Bob. "This is what comes of the higher education of women."

"There's a man down there," continued the crone, "a brother of Jerry Downey's, an' his leg had to be cut off last year because it was caught in

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a machine at the O'Learys'. He was very bad intirely, an' I sat up with him a couple of nights. Well, that man used to wake screeching from the pain in his foot an' toes, the foot an' toes, mind you, of the leg that was cut off an' wasn't there at all, at all. 'Yeh, Mat,' I used to say, 'don't be goin' on like that; sure it's only your imagination.' 'Yerrah, hould your tongue, woman,' he'd say back to me; '*honon-an-dhoul*, don't I feel it!'"

She moved on a few paces. I put my hand on her arm. "Listen to me," I cried. "You talked for a couple of minutes; what was it you said to her in Irish, and what did she say to you?"

"I can't tell you that, sir," the woman replied with a certain dignity. "I spoke to her in Irish so that you might not understand, like the way you spoke to her too, I suppose; an' well she knew what I was sayin'. She told me she learned it here in this part of the country. She said she meant no mischief to you, an' that's all I may say. So, I wish ye both good-day, an' may the Lord have us all in His holy keepin'. Sure they're well kept whom God keeps!"

This pious remark closed the conversation, for the woman, with a curtsey, turned suddenly into a neighbouring house, thus effectually putting an end to further questioning. We went on in silence, strolling home by the river that ran shimmering on to Oakgrove with its wood-crowned slopes. I could see my companion was abstracted, perhaps annoyed, by my conduct at Hauteville; our interview with the woman had probably restored his belief in my sanity, but he still wore a sorely puzzled air. For my own part I was not surprised by the woman's tranquil acceptance of the situation. I knew enough of Ireland to be aware that many a question which might give the

Psychical Research Society pause would be settled offhand by an Irish peasant, to whom nothing in the supernatural order is impossible or incongruous.

"One thing I must ask you, Dick," Speedwell observed, when we had discussed the matter at length. "Don't say anything about this spirit-rapping business to Ethel; she may be more susceptible than we."

"Have no fear on that score," I replied, "for I shall probably be on the road to-morrow, and no doubt shall soon forget the Lady of the Castle; London is not propitious to ghosts."

Bob laughed, feeling, I knew, relieved, although he insisted on my staying another day to see Gougane Barra; which I did, in a blinding wintry mist that made its squalor and loneliness more awful still, until in my wrath I said that all guide-books were liars, and an Irish guide-book the king of them all.

For my own part, I wished to get away some short time before my leave expired, so that I might satisfy myself on some important points in this strange experience. Reaching Cork next day at noon, I broke my journey there, and made inquiries for the solicitors to whom I had posted the envelope at Coachford, but could learn nothing about either themselves or the street in which they resided. Struck, however, by my earnestness, one of those whom I consulted, a solicitor himself, introduced me to a quiet, gentleman-like man who I understood had made the history and development of the city a special study. On learning my wants he took me to his office, and producing a few maps of Cork searched them carefully but unsuccessfully. "I see," he muttered; "it must go back before 1800." The next map we consulted was of an earlier date, and in

it we found the street I sought. My friend pushed his spectacles over his forehead, and looking at me began to laugh silently. "I am not surprised, sir," he said, "that you failed in your search. That street has been renamed, and instead of being the fashionable thoroughfare it once was is now inhabited only by the saddest class of the poor, those who still hide their poverty under the garb of shabby gentility. But your solicitors, we have a fair clue to them. Will you kindly hand me down that calf-bound volume on the second shelf? Thanks; it is a directory compiled in the year in which the map was published; I bought it at a bookstall for a few pence." He opened the work, ran his finger down an alphabetical list of names, and triumphantly read out to me those I required, together with the number of their place of business in the street mentioned.

My kindly helper would have detained me with much information of antiquarian interest, and indeed offered to show me the place in question, but my mind was full of another idea. If the names were genuine, then, after all, I had sent a real letter, and it should be now awaiting me at the Cork Post Office. Excusing myself, I hurried off to make inquiries there, leaving my scholarly friend in what he must have thought an ungrateful manner.

I cannot describe the frenzy of impatience with which I waited while the search for the letter was being prosecuted, for on it seemed to depend the last test I could apply to the truth of my adventure. At length an official returned bearing some envelopes, and among them I instantly recognised mine. The address, he explained, could not be found, and the letter being opened in due course, the contents were discovered, a little damaged. Trembling

with eagerness, I almost snatched the precious packet from him, and hastening to my hotel extracted from the box, which almost went to pieces in my hands, the memorable enclosure; but the parchment, that a few days before had looked comparatively fresh, had since faded to a muddy yellow and was torn in places, the very envelope which enclosed it being now more durable than this poor relic of the stormy past. Still, I could decipher the writing, and was thus able to identify it.

While poring over the sheet a sudden thought came to me. Why not deliver the document yourself? Carry out her wish so far as human effort may. I determined to do so.

I was to leave the city that night, and whatever I did must be done at once; so securing the letter and throwing on my hat, I again sought my painstaking acquaintance. I found him about to leave his office on the South Mall. Apologising for my sudden disappearance, I reminded him of his offer to show me the street I wished to find. Displaying a patient courtesy, which I now remember with a twofold gratitude since his place knows him no more, he consented, and hiring a jingle, or canvas-covered car, we skirted the river and its shipping, turned off through thoroughfares alive with traffic, and then rattled along over lonely, miserable streets intersected by alleys more squalid still. At one of these the driver pulled up, and we alighted. Desiring the man to wait, my guide led me through a tangle of evil-smelling lanes into another deserted street, one side being a long wall apparently enclosing some manufacturing premises. "Houses stood there once," said my companion; "but the site is occupied by that wall and those yards beyond. However you can see here of what fashion they must have been."

He pointed to a dreary line of neglected mansions that even still in their decay retained something of the strength and dignity which had marked them in their day of pride. Some were approached by flights of steps where ragged children were playing with the unconquerable cheerfulness of the Celt; others had deep, boldly-moulded porches of limestone that yet mocked time and change; all bore the ineffaceable stamp of former prosperity. My friend had spoken truly when he called the place shabby-genteel. There were no slatternly women lounging at the doors; nor was there any of the loud-voiced negro-like gaiety of the adjacent lanes, though many furtive and timid glances scanned us from behind the pitiful cracked flower-pots on the window-sills. A broken-looking man, clad in rusty black, crept up the steps before a house, and we saw a poor pinched woman greet him with the phantom of an embrace. We had here under our eyes the stage on which is played the tragi-comedy of genteel misery that makes its last stand in its last ditch. I had often laughed at Irish poverty; but in this silent, forgotten spot, the grave of so many hopes and dreams, it took another character which did not lend itself so readily to farcical tradition; and it seemed as if I could hear the Frenchwoman asking me inconsequently: "Is your land altogether innocent of this?"

Remembering her packet I muttered

an excuse, and mounting to the door of the most deserted-looking house on pretence of examining the tarnished plate thereon, slipped the document, with half-a-crown for the lucky finder, through one of the partly opened windows.

That is all. I feel keenly my inability to gather together the various strands of this narrative, weave them into one, and present the reader with a neatly rounded conclusion; but experience shows us daily, in affairs of far more common occurrence, that it is often futile to theorise and impossible to explain. It would seem, indeed, as if my extraordinary adventure, with its sharply contrasting contradictions and improbabilities, was designed expressly to show how utterly the human intellect may be baffled when it strives to rend the invisible veil which hides from us the Spirit Land whither we are all journeying. For myself, I have long since renounced all attempts at a solution; I am simply content to believe what I have set forth. Some days later I heard the familiar roar of London, and ere long the lonely Irish castle in the Irish stream was lost behind the flooding cares of this work-day world. But there are times still when I find myself once more beneath its shadow and face to face with the loveliest woman it has been my lot to meet; and I think of her last words, and wonder when and how we shall meet again.

THE FATHER OF THE BRITISH NAVY.<sup>1</sup>

THE new translation of the Apocrypha has not altered the injunction, "Let us now praise famous men"; but it may be doubted whether there is any text in Holy Writ which our nation is less apt in obeying; and the usual excuse is at least a true if not altogether a convincing one,—it is not the English way. What better proof of this could there be than the recent attempt to bring about something like a celebration of Trafalgar Day, and to revive some slight interest in the crowning achievement of our greatest sailor? A most laudable effort, but carried out, surely, in a way that would have raised a smile of contempt among most continental nations, and was indeed hardly in keeping with the examples of the classical past; and yet this feeble attempt was belauded as a novelty, and much discussed in the newspapers for at least a day afterwards. If these things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If Nelson and Trafalgar are so scantily remembered, what chance is there for naval heroes of an earlier date and less exalted fame? We have done enough, according to our national conscience, when we have dedicated a square and a column to the victor and his victory; we can barely spare a poor wreath or two for his commemoration day; we are too busy with commerce and politics, and time flies fast, and it all happened a hundred years ago. And so from the wisdom of the Son of

Sirach we turn to the wit of Byron and say:

Let not a monument give you or me hopes,  
Since not a pinch of dust remains of  
Cheops.

Yet there are signs that the nation is slowly awaking to the fact that it has had a great navy in the past; that it did in very truth once hold, and ought now and hereafter to hold, that command of the sea, the importance of which, with curious and characteristic ignorance, it imagines to have been first appreciated and explained by the notable writings of Captain Mahan. And so there is just a chance that some few may be curious to inquire into the state of the navy anterior to Nelson's date, and to discover who had the chief hand in forging the instrument he used to such skilful and noble purpose.

*Fortes creantur fortibus*; no one in his senses supposes that the navy of Nelson sprang into being, fully trained and competent, at his call. Trafalgar was the culminating point of a long period of preparation; and those who laid the foundations may justly claim to share in the final glory. But who were they, and at what period are we to look for them? To answer the last question first, we may fairly say that the history of the modern navy began with the wars of George the Second's reign, in the middle of the last century; and of its two founders, the name of Anson is familiar to every schoolboy, while the name of Hawke has been consigned to a singular and most undeserved oblivion. The fact is that to become a national hero demands that aroma of the romantic and the

<sup>1</sup> THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL LORD HAWKE; by Montagu Burrows, Captain R.N., and Chichele Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. 2nd edition, London, 1896.

extraordinary which hangs around the deeds of such men as Drake and Anson and Nelson, and was wanting in the laborious career of Hawke. Moreover the climax is more sensational than the inception: the blaze of the last great triumph dazzles us and suffices; and thus the man whom Admiral Keppel (the best possible authority of the time) styled in the House of Commons "the Father of the British Navy" has been obscured by the renown of his offspring, and Quiberon has paled before Trafalgar. Two slight proofs of this may be drawn from very different sources, the public-house and the Navy List. There is a certain immortality in signboards, for they are curiously tenacious of life, and express in a rough way the popular verdict on the doings of heroes. The names and the counterfeit presentments of Vernon and of Keppel (who owed his training to Hawke) still swing above many a tavern door, while that of Hawke has never been held worthy of this peculiarly British honour. Analogously, in the list of Her Majesty's ships, while Collingwood and Rodney, Anson and Howe are the eponymous heroes of the largest war-vessels afloat, the Hawke is but a first-class cruiser of seven thousand tons.

Such being the indirect evidence against him, it may well be asked, what were Hawke's claims to be called the Father of the Navy; and, if valid, how is it that his paternity has been so scantily recognised? It may at least be urged that the judgment of his contemporaries was widely different from that of posterity. Horace Walpole is not generally accused of indiscriminate praise, and yet his encomium on Hawke almost amounts to enthusiasm; Burke, who was a fairly severe critic on occasion, bestowed flattering epithets upon him in the House; George the Second, who,

whatever his faults, was a brave man himself and a judge of bravery in others, dubbed him "my captain;" and the GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, the broadsheets, the popular songs and other light literature of the time, bear witness to the popular estimate of the hero of Quiberon in such elegant stanzas as the following:

Though Confians did boast he'd conquer  
our coast,

Our thunder soon made Monsieur mute;  
Brave Hawke winged his way, then  
pounced on his prey,  
And gave him an English salute.

But Hawke's claim to the title which Keppel gave him rests mainly, not on a single battle nor on the rhapsodies of ephemeral literature, but on a discovery which was almost as important as Anson's, though it was made in the field of tactics rather than of topography. It is indeed surprising, almost incredible, that so late as the middle of the last century, after many hundred years of battles by sea, such a discovery still remained to be made; but the fact is as interesting as it is incontestable. The discovery was simply this,—and it sounds almost puerile when reduced to plain language—that naval engagements, to be worth fighting at all, must be decisive; that strict adherence to the recognised methods of procedure was very well at the commencement of an action, but was to be thrown to the winds when anything better could be done; that in fact (to use Hawke's own words in his instructions to his officers just before Quiberon) as regards the enemy, "he was for the old way of fighting, to make downright work of them." Surely the man deserves something more than a qualified oblivion who could deliver at the crucial moment such an order as this; a truism perhaps to our ears nowadays, but pregnant with influence at the time upon the naval warfare of the

future. How he understood it himself may be gathered from his retort to the master of his ship, who remonstrated with him on the perils of pursuing the French flagship further among the rocks and shoals of Quiberon Bay: "You have done your duty, sir, in showing me the danger; you are now to comply with my order and lay me alongside the *Soleil Royal*." How the lesson was taken to heart and developed by Rodney and by Nelson is familiar to every reader of English history.

The merit due to Hawke for enforcing this innovation, one may almost say this revolution, in tactics is enhanced by several circumstances. In the first place it portended, if unsuccessful, very considerable danger to the position and prospects of the innovator. The only previous occasion on which it had been tried in an engagement between fleets of equal size had exemplified the certainty of disgrace in case of failure; for the unfortunate Admiral Mathews, who broke the line in the action off Toulon, was himself promptly broken for so doing. Secondly, no one can read the minutes of the remarkable series of courts-martial which were held concerning both this and several subsequent actions, without being struck with the exceedingly critical conditions under which the naval warfare of that date had to be carried on. Certain hard and fast rules, intelligible enough in their origin, had been gradually formulated for the conduct of such warfare; the results so gained were monotonously and painfully inefficient; the nation at large was growling with impatience and disappointment, and, in the case of the affair off Toulon, peremptorily overrode the dilatoriness of the Admiralty, and forced a court-martial upon no less than two admirals and six captains. Whose genius was to solve

the problem of combining freedom of action on occasion with strictness of discipline in general? Whose sword was to cut the knot that fettered the daring of the individual and impeded the instinct of the hero? The man who from the beginning to the end of his splendid career, from the battle of Toulon to the battle of Quiberon, consistently taught and insisted on the "old way of fighting, to make downright work of them." But mere maxims are a waste of energy without sufficient preparations for their due observance; and the third fact, which enhances the merit of Hawke's innovation, and adds to his right to the title claimed for him, is that throughout his correspondence and despatches he shows himself to have been on the best of terms with his subordinate officers, keenly and constantly solicitous for the comfort and well-being of his crews, respectful, firm, and dignified towards his superiors. No one knew better than he how to seize upon victory at the doubtful moment; but he was equally well aware that the success of the stroke depends on the tempering of the blade, and that those happy results which are popularly attributed to good fortune are usually the natural issue of infinite trouble and foresight. His biographer, in summing up the causes which led to the success of Quiberon, says of him with justice:

In the present case it is not easy to decide which to admire most, the successful struggle for six months with the almost infinite difficulties of the situation, or the grand decisiveness of the final resolution when the moment for action arrived. The least weakness in giving way to the traditions of bureaucracy on the questions of victualling, cleaning, and despatching back again his ships, would have left Hawke powerless on the day of battle, with sick crews, ships that would not sail, and officers worn out with the endless fatigues of cruising in gales of wind and on a lee-shore. The least failure of self-reliance,

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the least attention to the officious suggestions that beset an admiral in such a time of excitement, the least relaxation of the steady discipline and even-tempered rule which, neglecting no detail, impresses every man in a fleet, from highest to lowest, with a desire to do his duty, and yet spreads around the cheerful spirit produced by human sympathy on the part of the chief, would in all probability have told fatally in such a prolonged conflict.

One is tempted to dwell, at greater length than is here possible, on this magnificent battle, the crowning feat of the wonderful year 1759; more especially as it appears to belong to that class of historical facts which everybody knows and nobody remembers. It is so impossible for us to realise the intense excitement of a long-projected, and at last impending, invasion of English shores by a French force; it seems so remotely probable now; it seemed so hourly imminent then. There are so many of the dramatic interludes and breathless pauses that are familiar in the story of the Armada and of Trafalgar, the alarums and excursions, the chance of storm and calm, the escape and the pursuit; the vast issues hanging on the arbitrament of an even combat; the mad rush of the encounter, and the glorious issue. It was indeed time that the tide should turn in favour of England, for the year 1757 had been one long dark record of disaster by sea and land, of divided counsels, of incompetence in high places, and of inefficient commanders mismanaging half-trained forces. But Pitt was at last at the helm: the country was with him to a man; and he could both lay his own plans and choose his own instruments for their execution. It was an exciting moment in the game of conquest; France and England the players, America and India the stake. Only two years previously it had seemed as if France were not only the luckier but the better player. Then

gradually the game changes, the issue is doubtful, the chances are about even. The splendid audacity of Clive at Plassey, the heroism of Wolfe at Quebec, the magnificent generalship of Frederic at Rossbach and Leuthen, forced the French government to have recourse to its last chance, the invasion of England. Nor was it merely the reckless effort of a despairing gamester. A false step or two on the part of the English commander, a lucky chance or two in the matter of winds and calms, and the fleets from Dunkirk, Brest, and Havre, with the army from Quiberon, might have joined in a common invasion which would have altered the course of history.

It was Hawke's task to watch those three strong fleets as a cat watches a mouse, all through the treacherous autumn weather and right into the turbulent winter. Blown from his station one day, he was back again the next; until the fiercest of the November gales forced him for four days from his post, and he hurried breathless back to find his prey escaped. The great French fleet was on its way to Quiberon where the army lay ready to embark, and the fate of England depended on one man's resolution. It was the crisis of the game; the players face to face and well matched, the scene and circumstances as dramatic as nature could make them. There was just one chance, for the English, of immediate and final victory, and every argument seemed opposed to it; it was, to throw prudence and precedents to the winds, to follow the enemy hot-foot through storm and shoal, and close with him at every risk, be it calm or tempest, daylight or darkness. We can see now that this was not the only, but the one best thing to do, for wisdom after the event is as clear-sighted as it is unsparing; but the point about this battle is that the Admiral saw his

course as clearly and rapidly as we do. It was no time for councils of war and eloquent debate. "We crowded after the enemy," says he, "with every sail our ships could bear." Curiously simple language this to enwrap a great resolve on which the fate of nations hung; yet perhaps the simplicity and the greatness were closely akin. And so, long past mid-day in the gloom of the November storm, the battle begins; but there is daylight enough for what has to be done. And the audience are ready too for the play; they line the beach in thousands to watch the unusual sight of a battle in the shallows. We can picture their hopes, as the rashness of the English leader promises prompt destruction; their surprise, when he waits to form no line of battle, but sends each ship against its nearest foe as fast as sails will carry her; their unwilling admiration when the Royal George forces one ship to strike, sends another to the bottom, and then hotly engages half-a-dozen at once; and their despair when the White Flag is utterly vanquished ere night falls, and saved from complete annihilation by nothing but the cover of darkness.

We may search through the splendid annals of the British Navy, and though we shall find victories in which larger fleets were engaged and issues as momentous at stake, we shall not find one in which so many adverse circumstances combined to make battle difficult, and decisive victory almost impossible. And yet, says the Admiral in the most modest despatch that victor ever penned, "I was under the necessity of running all risks to break this strong force of the enemy." Here was his great maxim put to the strongest test at last, and he elected "to make downright work of them."

To complete our estimate of the merit of this victory, we must remember that the two fleets were very fairly

matched in number of ships; and if the English had some slight superiority in number of guns, this was more than counterbalanced by the accurate knowledge which the French had of the coast. Nor were the commanders on either side badly matched in reputation and ability; for M. de Conflans had shown himself to be one of the very best men in the French navy, and M. du Verger, the vice-admiral, was an officer of exceptional ability and bravery. In fact the way in which they laid their plans upon this occasion, dashed out of Brest on the first opportunity, and so nearly succeeded in eluding the British fleet, is the best possible testimony to their merits as tacticians.

And lastly, if it is by results that the importance of a victory is to be gauged, few have been more prolific than Quiberon of immediate and of lasting consequences. "It not only," says Smollett, "defeated the projected invasion which had hung menacing so long over the apprehensions of Great Britain, but it gave the finishing blow to the naval power of France." And a French historian writes: "This deplorable catastrophe consummated the humiliation of France. The navy, whose honour had hitherto been intact, fell to the level of the land-forces. The corruption, effeminacy, and selfishness of the Court now penetrated the military, and then carried away the naval nobility." Moreover its effect upon the finances of that country was disastrous. The public credit collapsed, the payment of interest on the National Debt was stopped, and the most extreme measures had to be employed to raise money. Nor was the projected invasion regarded in England as an empty rhetorical threat, the mere moving of a pawn or two in a diplomatic game of chess. The letters from the Admiralty to Hawke are full of nervous apprehension, while

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his replies on the other hand exhibit in their highest degree that cool grasp of the situation, that deep-seated determination to do the wisest and best thing in the circumstances, which Horace ascribes to the calm and resolute man whom neither the rash counsels of the citizens nor the fury of the gale will shake from his firm resolve. The fury of the gale (with the Bay of Biscay instead of the milder Adriatic) has been dwelt upon already; the rash counsels were in the present case not a whit less furious; for the historian of the war tells us that "to such a pitch were the people of England incensed by the opportunity given to M. Conflans on the retreat of Admiral Hawke from the bay, that they would have allowed no excuse, nor considered the irresistible power of the winds and the seas that drove him home, but made him responsible for his misfortunes." If further proof were wanted of the justice of this forecast, it might be found in the almost painfully ludicrous fact that on the very day of the victory, on the very day when the great Admiral was setting the crowning touch to his bravery and his patriotism, an excited mob was burning him in effigy as a traitor and a coward for having allowed the French to escape his blockade.

One more circumstance which came near to fettering Hawke's movements, and to causing the loss of the critical moment, remains to be mentioned. It is described in that dull biography of Chatham which inspired one of Macaulay's most brilliant essays, and is pithy enough to quote in full.

There was a question about sending Hawke to sea to keep watch over M. de Conflans; it was November; the weather was stormy and dangerous for a fleet. Mr. Pitt, in bed with the gout, was obliged to receive those who had business with him in a room where there were two beds, and where there was no fire, for he could not

bear one. The Duke of Newcastle (the Prime Minister in name), who was a very chilly person, came to see him on the subject of this fleet, which he was most unwilling to send to sea. He had scarcely entered the room when he cried out, shivering all over with cold: "How is this? No fire?" "No," said Mr. Pitt, "when I have the gout I cannot bear one." The Duke, finding himself obliged to put up with it, took a seat by the bedside of the invalid, wrapped up in his cloak, and began the conversation. But unable to stand the cold for any length of time, he said, "Pray allow me to protect myself from the cold in that bed you have by your side," and without taking off his cloak, he buried himself in Lady Esther Pitt's bed and continued the conversation. The Duke was strongly opposed to risking the fleet in the November gales; Mr. Pitt was absolutely resolved that it should put to sea; and both argued the matter with much warmth. "I am positively determined the fleet shall sail," said Pitt, accompanying his words with the most lively gesticulations. "It is impossible; it will perish," said the Duke, making a thousand contortions. Sir Charles Frederick, of the Ordnance, coming in at the moment, found them in this ridiculous position; and had infinite trouble in keeping his countenance when he discovered the two ministers deliberating on a matter of such great importance in a situation so novel and extraordinary. The fleet nevertheless put to sea; and Mr. Pitt was right, for Admiral Hawke defeated M. de Conflans; and it was the most decisive victory the English gained over the French during that war.

The thanks of the House of Commons in the familiar flowery style, a modest pension for two lives, a peerage, delayed for seventeen years after the date of Quiberon and granted when the recipient was too old and infirm to enjoy it,—these were the rewards thought sufficient for a lifelong devotion to the most arduous duties, for a victory which annihilated an enemy's navy, saved England from certain invasion, and set the most splendid example in our sea-annals of British pluck and resolution. They certainly did not err on the side of generosity; and the services which earned them contrast somewhat rudely

with the achievements for which coronets and ribbons and orders are so profusely bestowed in modern times. But Hawke was the last person to complain, perhaps to care. In an age when Court honours were largely the issue of Court intrigue and political jobbery, his monument proudly states that he "disdained to ask" for preferment; and though mural tablets are not always veracious history, the man's whole life bears out the noble sentiment. But neither age nor illness could impair his vigorous instincts, or quench the fire of battle. Only a year before his death, when he was seventy-five and failing fast in health, he wrote to his friend Admiral Geary, who was blockading Brest: "My good friend, I have always wished you well, and have ever talked freely and openly to you upon every subject connected with the service. Recollect some of these passages, and for God's sake, if you should be so lucky as to get sight of the enemy, get as close to them as possible. Do not let them shuffle with you by engaging at a distance; but get within musket-shot if you can: that will be the way to gain great honour, and will be the means to make the action decisive."

A nation will always, no doubt, choose its chief popular heroes from among that small class of extraordinary men who have the power, which every one can recognise and no one word can accurately define, of creating an enthusiasm amounting to devotion by means of some hidden, half-conscious force that is in them.

Nelson is perhaps the prototype of this class; and the names of Drake, Napoleon, and Nicholson among others, spring readily to the lips. But the pre-eminence of such men as these, around whom the romance of history clusters, need not blind us entirely to the claims of the more ordinary heroes, whose work was often as important in itself, and sometimes formed a direct preparation for the more abnormal achievements.

And surely it is surprising that a sailor whose claim to the gratitude of the navy and of his country was of such overwhelming importance, whose career was an almost perfect model of devotion to duty, of untiring attention to the wants and the rights of his subordinates, of obedience tempered by daring, of patient and wise preparation for conclusive and crushing results, should not only have been kept waiting seventeen years for the peerage he so richly deserved, but should have been left for over a century without the posthumous tribute of a competent biography. That want has now at last been supplied; and the reader who desires (and what Englishman does not desire?) to study the genesis of our sea-power, will find in it an interesting and graphic account of a man who owed his success to his own merits rather than to interest or good fortune; and he will rise from its perusal with the conviction that the title Hawke would have coveted most was the one which Keppel so justly conferred upon him, —the Father of the British Navy.

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## A DAY ON THE YELLOW CLAY.

YELLOW clay,—the name is not attractive, the substance is not beautiful, the associations are neither of health nor enjoyment. Barren shrubs, sickly reeds, rank disorderly herbage, are the natural characteristics of yellow clay all the world over; while to unfortunate humanity it is connected chiefly with garments caked from heel to waist, with slovenliness and with rheumatism. Test it, if you will, in the so-called paradise of New Zealand, on the cold comfortless hills round Wellington where men have felled the forest that once hid their nakedness, and you will find the blackened corpses of the trees shrouded in wiry unprofitable bracken, and English gorse struggling with noxious native weeds for a hold on the miserable soil. Or go no further than English Devon, a county generally remembered by tracts of rich red loam and cliffs of stern gray ironstone, and there you will see, stretching from the Cornish border full thirty miles eastward, a large patch of as wretched and inhospitable country as ever raised a thistle. Clovelly, with all its beauties of cliff and wood and wave, is within a few hundred yards; but visitors seldom turn their eyes from the sea to mark what manner of land it is that thus abruptly ends in a precipice of ironstone above the Bristol Channel. And they are right, for it is condemned to hopeless infertility, and all green things are crushed between the hammer of the west wind and the anvil of the yellow clay.

And yet there is something to be loved in the yellow clay. We speak not as an agriculturist, for though we have been assured by many a farmer

that it is capital land for summering bullocks in dry seasons, we cannot forget that dry seasons are not the rule in Devon, and that the little red cattle of the country possess to a singular degree the virtue of growing fat upon poor fodder. Moreover we have a not wholly grateful feeling towards certain men of a past generation who sunk thousands of pounds in the endeavour to improve some of this detestable land and make two blades of grass grow where one declined to grow before; a philanthropic effort which resulted only in the temporary discomfort of innocent snipe, and the lasting impoverishment of a deserving posterity. But we love this yellow clay for its steady refusal to be improved. Most people have in their hearts a secret admiration for any creature that declines to be tamed, whether it be horse or dog or man. It is true that the fate of such is generally to be shot or hanged or otherwise cleared out of the way; but no such summary measures can be taken with land. You may gash it with drains and gutters, but if it be irreclaimable yellow clay you will hardly leave so much as a scar upon it; and your efforts will be as fruitless and, if you would but confess it, only less ridiculous than those of Xerxes to chastise the Hellespont. Wild animals that shrink from the discipline of man know the yellow clay for their friend and flock to it, just as men who shun order and obedience take refuge in savage lands. Wherefore to him that loves a really wild day's sport the bleak, inhospitable, forsaken land is a paradise indeed.

Of all months in the year Novem-

ber is on the whole the best for a walk with the gun over the yellow clay, with a soft wind blowing from the south-west and a damp leaden sky overhead ; a day when Lundy rises gray and cold out of a cold gray sea, and the herring-boats fly home with their red sails turned to gray, and the smoke of the coasting colliers throws aloft an almost welcome cloud of inky black as a plaything for the mild warm breeze. The great rolling range of Exmoor, twenty miles away, is half shrouded in mist ; but, unless we are mistaken, the staghounds are even now jogging gently over the heather to the meet, and the old huntsman is remarking, as his horse sinks hoof-deep in the spongy soil, that "the water will fly on the forest" when hounds begin to run. But they must run without us to-day, for we have put on our very worst clothes for a long and dirty walk, and are filling our cartridge-bag. Shall it be twenty or thirty cartridges to-day ? Twenty will be ample in all probability, but let us make it thirty, for the weight even so is trifling. And now let us begin the day, as always in North Devon, by climbing a hill. A steep narrow road, with banks four feet above our head and a bottom that the efforts of the Local Board strive in vain to alter from a kind of river's bed to a macadamised highway, leads us whither we are bound ; and after a mile of travelling in the close muggy atmosphere we feel as though we were marching through tropical forest.

Here is the top at last : the wind strikes gratefully cool in our face ; and there leaning over a gate is a keeper, black and swarthy as a Spaniard, with a single spaniel. He too has donned his very worst clothes, and, did we not know him to be the gentlest of living creatures, might pass for a dangerous companion. There are not many snipe in, he thinks, though there were plenty a month

ago, and he had not seen many woodcock ; there may be a pheasant or two, and there is a brood or two of partridges, though terrible wild ; hares are almost extinct and rabbits very scarce ; but we can't tell what we shall find till we try, and we had best walk through the beech spinney first, if we will please to take the left-hand side while he goes through the middle. The spinney aforesaid is but of two acres, a collection of miserable stunted trees which fight with infinite bravery a losing battle against the eternal wind from across the Atlantic. We scramble over a gap in the bank, smearing ourself all over with greasy yellow clay in the process, and, knowing the wild ways of the Devonshire spaniel, hasten forward alongside the spinney. The beeches sigh mournfully as though expecting a gale, and we only faintly catch the sound of wings in the trees behind us. We whisk round ; nothing is to be seen ; then again round, and there, a good forty yards ahead of us, are a long bill and two great lazy wings flapping leisurely off with all the assurance of an owl. We fire the first barrel at him instantly, and, unless the smoke has deceived us, he falls leisurely to the ground ; but even while the report is ringing in our ear we hear the keeper yelling something unintelligible behind us, and again face rapidly to the rear. But this time the lazy wings are full seventy yards away, and as the second barrel is snapped after them they simply rise a few feet in the air and flap away erratically as if they might pause at any moment, on and on and on till they are fairly lost to sight. The keeper clammers out of the spinney, stands on the bank, and takes off his cap in despair. "There was two got up at my feet and went back," he says ; "beautiful shots. I depended that you would have got the both." We endeavour to excuse our-

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self as best we may, and point out that we have killed one that went forward; but he will not be comforted. He had made sure that both would come to us, and if they did not the fault is obviously ours; but he adds with a shake of the head, "They'm false, they 'oodcocks; false as rats they be." And we, who know the similes of Devon and are aware that this comparison is the highest tribute that can be paid to the cunning of any wild animal, feel rather less guilty than we did.

And now we pass fairly on to the yellow clay moors, thousands of acres of rolling ground, the yellow grass dotted with clumps of gorse, and cut up by ragged neglected fences, sour and ugly and soaking with water. The spaniel, which so far has been kept rigidly to heel, seizes the opportunity to break away to the nearest gorse-clump, and in spite of frantic rebukes, declines to return. "Chloe—a, you wild old hermit," yells the keeper, for spaniels in Devon, for some reason, are frequently christened with classical names, and a hermit (we have struggled in vain to imagine why) is the measure of wildness. "Why do you bring out a wild young dog?" we ask with asperity. "Oh, she's nine or ten year old," he answers with a sweet smile; "and she isn't wild most times, but she's terrible hard of hearing. She'll be back in a minute, but I expect we'm best get on after her." We think so too, and presently come upon her supremely busy on what is evidently a very faint line of scent. "Looketh like a pheasant," says the keeper softly; "please to keep on after her, sir." She puzzles it out, inch by inch, very slowly, and takes us on for three hundred yards to a gateway, which, as usual on these moors, is filled with a sea of deep mud and twelve inches of water. Here scent naturally fails, and the

keeper, who has come to the conclusion that we are on the stale trail of that rare animal, a hare, is for calling the dog off; but our curiosity is aroused and we insist on casting forward, to see whether nothing can be learned from the impressionable clay. Not a sign is to be found on this side; but on splashing through the water we find on the far side new tracks in the softest of the clay, and, where it grows drier, the unmistakable imprint of three long claws,—nay, in one favourable spot we think we can detect the mark of a spur.

The spaniel is called forward and laid on, but scent is weak from water, and she cannot own it; so we cast forward as gravely as though a fox were before us, and after some trouble hit the line once more. After a couple of hundred yards scent improves, and the spaniel's pace with it; and presently we drop our gun to the trail and are fain to run. Still on to a patch of gorse where the spaniel throws up for a moment, but after a few minutes of desperate excitement makes a sudden dash into a tuft of fern; and up rises a great cock-pheasant with all the astounding clamour that once so alarmed Mr. Briggs. We have had such good sport already, hunting his drag up to his bed that, but for the keeper, we should be inclined to spare him; but old cock-pheasants are mischievous as vermin, and his fate is sealed. The spaniel picks him up and retrieves him with every sign of satisfaction, and we make a mental note of our run. Time, about twenty minutes; distance, not less than half a mile; and a kill in the open.

So far, good. We are already wet through and splashed from head to foot, so we make the more readily for a patch of bog that is a favourite with snipe. The ground quakes beneath us as though we were on bubbles, and we step warily, for if we break through

the thin crust of moss on which we walk, we cannot tell whether we shall sink to our knees, to mid-thigh, or to our armpits. Every instant we expect to hear the rush of wings and the shrill bleat of the little white-breasted bird; but it comes not, and we have almost given up hope when, with a louder whirr, an unexpected covey of partridges rises, a long shot ahead of us, and skims away with the speed of the wind. A snap-shot from our first barrel brings down the hindmost bird of them, and immediately a wisp of a dozen snipe rises three gun-shots before us, startled by the report, and vanishes out of our sight. It is exasperating, but it cannot be helped: on the moors one must kill what one can whenever one can; and the man who will not fire from dread of spoiling his own sport had better stay at home.

We watch the last of the snipe fade away against the gray clouds, when we are interrupted by a shrill voice shouting something unintelligible five hundred yards away. The keeper vociferates an equally unintelligible reply, and remarks that 'tis Mr. Buzzacott a-speaking, and that he made out the word partridges. Presently Mr. Buzzacott appears in person, as shabbily dressed as the poorest of his labourers, although he rents three hundred acres of yellow clay and better land; but he is received with great deference by the keeper, for he is the most eloquent preacher in the nearest chapel, and the keeper's wife is one of the pillars of his congregation. We have never sat under him ourself, but we know his discourses on hell-fire by village repute as some of the most moving that ever were delivered on that favourite topic of dissenting orators; and being the descendant of French Huguenot refugees, originally called Boucicault, he has perhaps a better title to fervour than most of

his neighbours. He has not seen many less and grasps our hand with a pheasant warmth. "They partridge or two of in the richest of shrill wild; hares gone up to my little rabbits very you will fetch a compass that we shall to the far side of them, till best walk undoubtedly go to the little first, if we bed, where I've seen them hand side times. I think, moreover the middle. will find another covey the out of two long been in doubt whether the stunted one brood on my farm or two broods, but what I have seen in the last two weeks satisfactorily convinceth me that there's two." Every syllable comes out crisp and sharp as the shot from a Maxim gun, so excellent is the practice of the pulpit; and we start at once to fetch the necessary compass round the root-field, walking too fast to waste another word.

"Now," says Mr. Buzzacott, as he throws down a harrow, kicks away half a cartload of gorse, and tenderly lifts up the bars of a rickety gate which are held together by two straw bandages, as many hazel binders, and several pieces of string, "Here the birds be. There they go—da—" he adds, the warnings of the chapel forgotten for a moment in his excitement, but remembered in time to omit the final consonants and so save his conscience. "They'm gone right," he continues, intently watching the flight of the birds. "Now, sir, follow down my old fence, and you'm sure to find them, if you'll excuse me from attending on you further, for I am afflicted with the rheumatics." So off we start again to try down the fence for half a mile towards our lost covey. But the fence must be crossed, and that is no easy matter. First comes a deep ditch overgrown with gorse and thorns; then a bank broad enough to drive a coach on, also heavily overgrown with thorns, and so hollowed in the middle as almost to be cut in two; then an

self as best we of like manner with that we have, some remarkably soft forward; but beyond it. The folks that He had made fences must either have come to us, as of their boundaries or fault is obvious sportsmen, for one never with a shaft at game they may hold. false, they are able through it somehow, they be." h splashing and scratching, similes of a spaniel selects the hollow this compadist and becomes busy at that can't

bit dodging in and out along-side the ditch is the first victim, and a stray woodcock the second; and then the spaniel begins to run with a keenness that shows that but one animal can be before her. There is nothing for it but to run as near as we may alongside of her, and hope that we may not be beaten by the most cunning of birds; but running in the deep, slippery soil is no such easy matter, and a cross fence brings us up short. We are barely at the top, panting and breathless, when we hear the heavy flutter of a rising cock-pheasant, who skims away low on the other side of the fence, giving us no chance but a long snap-shot, which is duly fired without result. But the report flushes a wisp of half-a-dozen snipe, of which we have just time to pick off one, and then the bank beneath our feet slides away in a small avalanche of greasy clay; we hang for a moment on our heels, pass swiftly on to the broad of our back, and then shoot down gracefully into the ditch below us. We are splashed up to the eyes, and caked with clay from neck to heel; the ditch is up to our waist, a protruding root has lifted our jacket over our head, and our face and hands are buried for a moment in a gorse-bush; but the voice of the keeper, unable from the other side of the boundary fence to witness the catastrophe, still urges us forward, we know not wherefore, and we

scramble out and on, loading and repairing damages as we go.

Out comes a rabbit, breaking boldly across the field, not too near, but a cross-shot, and therefore an easy one. He rolls over handsomely, and then, as usual, when one least expects it, up rises a covey of partridges, wild as hawks, but just within range. One bird falls to a very lucky shot, six more fly away, and we pause for the moment quite exhausted. The keeper, bewildered by the shooting of which he can see nothing, crushes his way to us through the boundary fence, and rejoices to find that there is something to be picked up, more indeed than we had expected, for the spaniel produces not one dead partridge, but two, though how the second can have come by his death, unless by the shot that killed the rabbit, before the covey rose from the ground, is a mystery. However, we are now satisfied that we have found both coveys, and that there are thirteen partridges for certain somewhere in the bleak acres around us, if we can only find them; not a great stock according to the ideas of some gentlemen of the gun, but to us on the yellow clay a multitude without number. Also, we have certain knowledge of one pheasant, and we may have the good luck to run against some more snipe.

So we tear on joyfully to the withy-bed, which is indeed no withy-bed, but a small sheet of shallow water, choked with high, sickly weeds, and surrounded with quaking moss. It is not a place in which one would naturally look for partridges; but all wild animals, from the red-deer downwards, seem to have a passion for lying in a dry spot amid wet ground, so we approach it with all silence and caution. No bird rises, and the spaniel, now quite disciplined by hard exercise, is sent in to see what she can find. Still no sign of a bird.

She splashes through the water to the ruined bank that dams it; and, after much rummaging, makes a dash into a tuft of grass, and away skims a partridge at his best pace. He drops dead, but is hardly fallen when another rises, likewise to share his fate, and five more are flushed and away before we can re-load. We are lucky to have found them, for when the Devonshire partridge takes it into his head to hide and lie fast, it is difficult to make him show himself. How often have we walked for hours, even in early September, over farms where we knew birds to be plentiful, and failed to find a single one. If they wish to conceal themselves there is always a great bank within a hundred yards of them, where any number of coveys could find shelter, and you may tread on them before they will rise. We remember once to have driven a covey of fourteen into a scrap of copse not forty yards square. Two men and two dogs went through it with busy sticks and hideous noises, and, finding nothing, joined us in abuse of the man who said that he had marked them down. He, like a sensible fellow, said nothing, but simply stayed by the copse for half an hour after we had left it, and presently saw the whole fourteen run out as if nothing had happened, to seek new lodging in an adjoining bank.

By this time we are beginning to look forward to an extraordinary day's sport, and wishing that we had brought more cartridges. A couple more snipe and a couple more rabbits heighten our hopes, and we talk big about killing more game than we care to carry. After such luck we should not altogether be surprised to come upon black game, though in truth we have never seen a poul, as they call him in Devon, anywhere within twenty miles of the place where we stand.

But we can never tell what we may flush next in this country; a bittern, a wild goose, or even a pelican would be no great surprise, and would be more welcome to us, to be seen and saluted, than a hundred pheasants to be shot at and killed. But it is not safe to count on the yellow clay for a day of continuous sport, and though we try every likely spot, for the next two hours not a cartridge is fired. Magpies, hawks, crows, and a dozen of the keeper's pet abominations greet us at a respectful distance, and as we draw for a time nearer to the cliffs we have leisure to admire the red bill of the Cornish chough, and the graceful wheeling flight of two pair of great blunt-winged buzzards. But game we see none, though we tramp on with exemplary diligence; and our scattered coveys seem to have vanished into thin air.

At last we resolve to forsake the open, and draw a long strip of ragged gorse-brake adjoining our boundary; and lest we should give to our neighbour what we want for ourselves we draw it down wind. We steal down to the leeward end, take our stand in the middle of a tiny stream, which we select as on the whole the driest and firmest spot to be found in an extremely treacherous patch of ground, and wait for what may come. A woodpigeon, evidently scared by the keeper, comes first, sailing down over the hedge under which we stand concealed, a fine rocketing shot. Have we held far enough before him? Yes, the swift wings close, the ringed neck sinks, and he falls far beyond us in a cloud of white down. We hear the spaniel speaking faintly on the lower side of the brake, and watch sharply for a rabbit. A water-ousel comes flitting down over our head in panic terror, and a water-rail, which for a moment we mistake for a jack-snipe follows him: three jays, which have

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been screeching irresolute for some minutes, at last make up their minds to face the open and be off; but still the spaniel speaks three hundred yards above us sharply and savagely, we know not upon what scent. Then there is a slight rustle in the hedge, a lithe brown body appears for an instant and, just giving a glimpse of a yellow belly, vanishes instantly into a rabbit-hole. Where there are stoats there are no rabbits, and we cease to watch for them accordingly. The spaniel has fallen silent, the blackbirds now begin to stream out past us with terrified screams, and we therefore conclude that, though we can hear nothing of them, keeper and dog have nearly beaten the brake out to us. Another rustle in the hedge and out comes very leisurely and slowly within ten yards of us a great gray fox. Quite unconscious of our presence he stands for a moment listening, and we can study him at our ease; a great gray fellow as we have said, evidently old and well stricken in years, with a bit of a ruff round his neck that gives him almost the appearance of a wolf. His teeth are past their first sharpness, as we guess; but we suspect that he would lead even the best pack of hounds a merry dance, and make a brave fight at the end. We remember to have seen just such another on Exmoor, draggled, bent, and beat, hurl himself into a tuft of gorse and turn defiant as a stag to meet his doom. The pack had begun to tail after a long chase; a single hound first came up to him, and, after one glance into the gorse bush, decided that it would be more prudent to wait for assistance before going any further.

There he stands, the hoary-brushed old vagabond, his mind little perturbed, but inclined to think on the whole that he had better move. They are not his sworn enemies that have intruded upon him, he is sure of that.

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But hark! the keeper opens his mouth to cheer the spaniel, and the gray ears listen intently. No! it is not the sound that he dreads; certainly it is not, but it is disagreeably near of kin to it, and it is best to beat a dignified retreat. A muffled note from the spaniel confirms his resolution, and he trots slowly away at his ease. It is perhaps a shame to shake such a confiding nature, but old foxes must not be suffered to relapse into imprudent repose. We used to be able to halloo once upon a time, and here is an excuse for recovering our lost art. The gray brush gives a whisk, the stealthy trot becomes a gallant stride, and the old sinner vanishes in haste away to the cliffs, or he best knows whither. The keeper hurries out to the sound; he has been busy with the study of a heap of feathers, and the spaniel not caring to face the gorse has been whiling away the time with a dance round a hedgehog.

But this interlude has broken the spell. As we strike away back to our ground of the morning, we get a shot into a flock of golden plover and add one of them to the bag. A ragged fence unexpectedly produces another woodcock, and the adjoining moor a jack-snipe; then, just as we are wondering whither we shall go next we hear a familiar shrill voice, and Mr. Buzzacott, riding a bare-backed cart-mare, with a halter, comes splashing through the clay to tell us that he has flushed one brood of partridges on his *arish* (stubble) and marked them down. Poor unfortunate birds! but we make haste after them, and are presently blundering, not quite so fresh as in the morning, over tussocks of furze and sickly rushes in pursuit. They are wild, but we manage to drop one, and the indefatigable Buzzacott, galloping heavily on the cart mare, marks

them down again. Once more we hurry after them, for the light is beginning to fail. They are scattered and rise singly; two are easily bagged, and then an ominous cloud from the sea breaks into sharp cutting rain. The moisture is a small matter, for we are wet through to the waist already, but the growing darkness is more serious. The third bird rises and is missed with both barrels; the fourth has the same luck, and the fifth we lose sight of altogether. It is of no use; we never could see well in the dusk, and having but two cartridges left decide to try no more. Mr. Buzzacott smiles with kindly contempt, and suggests that we should jump on to the back of his mare and go on; nor for all our argument will he believe that we stop not because we are unwilling to walk, but because we are unable to see.

Well then, if we must go home, he will show us the shortest way. We know what that means, but indeed a little food with rest and shelter is not unwelcome after our walk, and it is not unwillingly that we follow Mr. Buzzacott into his house. A pale girl, looking doubly ghastly in the flickering light of the fire, rises as we enter, and the hacking cough, which even so much exertion entails, tells too plainly what is amiss. She answers in reply to our inquiries that she is better, but Mr. Buzzacott will not hear of it. "Oh! her's weaker," he says cheerfully and encouragingly, "weaker every day, I can see that." The girl, we are glad to say, is well and hearty at this moment, but it is not from want of preparation for death on her father's part. But in truth all of Mr. Buzzacott's class and below it, in Devon at any rate, and we believe elsewhere, seem to feel a positive delight in feeling

the presence of death. Even in their letters, whenever inspiration fails the monotonous phrase, "Dear father and mother, may we meet in heaven," recurs again and again. But all such reflections are cut short by the entrance of Mrs. Buzzacott, who with many apologies leads us into the parlour, and there, after a few minutes' solitude, which we eagerly devote to an old hawker's print of Commerce restoring Prosperity to France and England, *Anno* 1803 (three imposing females measuring four feet from forehead to waist, five more from waist to knee, and three more from knee to heel), we are set face to face with tea enough for a dozen hungry men.

With difficulty we take our leave before we have seriously over-eaten ourselves, and walk off with the keeper through the driving rain. He has been well-cared for too, and is talkative. Gradually he reveals to us unasked that, in spite of Mr. Buzzacott's influence, who is of course a Radical, he himself is a reactionary Tory. There is too much schooling nowadays, he thinks. Boys can't do naught nor maids neither; soon they'll be too grand to wash their own chemises. Three miles are traversed quickly in listening to these outpourings, and it is only when we reach our door that it occurs to us to count our bag. One cock-pheasant, a venerable bird with spurs an inch long, we left with Mr. Buzzacott, who, we hope for his own sake, will stew it for many hours. Besides that we have four brace of partridges, three woodcock, four snipe, four rabbits, a plover, and a pigeon; and we do not ask for a better day over the yellow clay.



THE STORY OF A TIN MINE.<sup>1</sup>

THIS is the story of the mine at Ara Tiga in the district of Kinta in the State of Perak. In the beginning Youp-bin Mahomed and Abdullah-bin-Daud his nephew had decided that they would not trouble to irrigate their rice-field, but would leave the water in the dam and sell the fish. Something miscarried, we know not what; at any rate they found it necessary to hold an informal council one evening, squatted on the bamboo floor of Youp's cottage. Between them was a heap of *sirih*-leaves, some morsels of *betel*-nut, and a little pot of quick-lime; over which they discussed the situation, and spoke of pence and halfpence in the gentlest voices and the sweetest language that the tongue of man can compass; each with a quid of tobacco between his lower lip and his front teeth.

"*Aih*, vexation!" said Abdullah. "Money there is none."

"What can we do?" murmured the elder man. "It is the decree of Allah."

A Malay's decision is a thing to be come by only after slow and laborious deliberation. Youp would have been content to review the situation so long as a mouthful of rice and salt fish was left. But young Abdullah was a man of some promptitude (for a Malay), and a month had hardly passed before, at his suggestion, the two were equipped with the necessary

permission to cut *gutta*-trees for six months, and further with two little biting Malay hatchets, a small provision of rice, and a change of clothing. The resourceful Abdullah moreover negotiated a loan of ten dollars from a Chinese miner, in consideration of which he undertook to inform his confiding friend of any promising tin-land that they might happen on in their journeyings. Foolish Youp wanted to go to the expense of Prospecting Licenses, but Abdullah maintained that this law was an unnecessary one, not worth obeying, and he carried his point.

So they set off into the jungle, those two sturdy little brown men, clad in their cotton coats and their tartan *sarongs* (half kilt, half petticoat), and each with his luggage bundled on his back. Day by day they lopped and hewed about them, and in the afternoons they would run up a little shelter of bamboo and palm-leaves, collect the *gutta* from the trees they had felled, and cook their evening rice. They strayed far away from the broad highways and the human life that borders them; and as their business led them ever further and further on, they wandered at last round the mountain foot into a valley where the jungle grew inviolate, save for the uncertain visits of the Sakai, the wild people of the mountain and forest. Timid little creatures are these, and no lovers of notoriety; but the man who discovered the Ara Tiga tin-mine must submit to have notoriety thrust upon him. His name was Blian Tara, and many people have found their names in print who could not rival him in any one of his many accomplish-

<sup>1</sup> Perak is one of the Protected Native States on the west side of the Malay Peninsula. A large proportion of the tin that finds its way into the markets of the world comes from the mines, or rather the alluvial diggings, of these States. They are worked, for the most part, by Chinese immigrants from the province of Canton.

ments; who could not, for example, spit a squirrel at forty yards with a poisoned dart from a blow-gun, and who would be lost and starved in the jungle that is to him the element in which he lives and has his being.

It befell in this wise. Blian Tara had a friend, a brave man and a civilised, one not afraid to venture on the exposed white roads, or even into the rush and tumult of the Chinese mining villages, with wild *durian* fruit to sell. This friend had tempted him to hunt for tin, with promises of wealth in beads and matches and a great white beer-bottle, like that one the tribe had found one memorable day when the surveyor had left the new trigonometrical station on the mountain top.

Accordingly when our two Malays came upon him, he, having taken the plunge from a venatorial to an industrial state of life, was standing in the bed of a rivulet, scraping down earth from the steep bank into the water to try for tin. Now for ten generations his tribe had been harried away from their river homes by the Malay invaders; and though rape and murder had not visited them for full a score of years, and had passed into their spirit-lore, still a great fear fell on the little man when he saw two of his traditional enemies on the bank above him; not a relaxing terror such as loosens your tame man's sinews, but the instinctive stimulating fear of a hunted animal, which flashed in a moment from brain to feet. Before he realised that he was frightened, he was up on the opposite bank and safe in the forest's black tangle of brushwood; where, returning with a chastened heart to his blow-gun and the hunting of long-tailed monkeys, Blian Tara was not likely, for the remainder of his days, to rouse the anger of the mountain gods by further stealing of their tin-sand.

Abdullah stared for a moment at the black water where it sucked at the fallen bank and swirled on in a yellow stream. Youp swung his bundle from behind his back under his left arm, and after a hasty search produced half a cocoa-nut shell (that unfailing companion of your jungle-farer in the land of tin), and handed it to his nephew saying, "Come, let us try it." Down jumped Abdullah knee-deep into the sludge, with which he filled the shell, kneading and working it with his fingers at the surface of the running water, while he sat a-squat on a flat stone in mid-channel. The lighter mud drifted away like a tawny ribbon on the face of the water; but when the washing was completed there was left such a residuum of grayish-black grains as to make the men stare at each other in wonder, crying, "*Amboi!*" and "*Illahi Allah!*" No tin-lander but would have seen at once the importance of their discovery. Some washings there are that yield their tin in the form of powdery black grains, so light and so mixed with iron-sand that it is a chance if the two do not swim away together from the wash-box. Others, on the contrary, give big angular crystals, that have been carried but a little distance from the matrix, which would be a treasure if they were not so entangled in the sticky clay that the wash-dirt needs puddling before they can be extricated. But here nature had done her work neither in excess nor in defect, and the result promised to be a truly golden mean.

"The hope of mines," saith the Viscount St. Albans, "useth to make the planters [and *gutta*-hunters no less] lazy in other things." Youp and Abdullah felt that to toil further at tree-felling was out of the question. A little further up the stream grew three wild *banians*, or fig-trees, with spreading bushy limbs, which, later on,

were to give the mine its name of Ara Tiga. Here they pitched their camp; and all that afternoon, and far into the night, they chattered together, raising many and elaborate castles into the air.

Any one familiar with the Malay genius will know the long and tortuous process by which he arrives at a decision. We will not attempt therefore to describe in detail how Youp and Abdullah made up their great minds, or recount the interminable arguments, and the endless references to fortune and destiny with which they must certainly have been interspersed. The upshot was that they should turn their backs on the small trader who had advanced the money with which they started, and make an offer of their discovery to the great Chinese miner Lim Ah Fook. Their luck was shining bright; should they neglect to make their hay? In the circumstances they felt that they would be justified in omitting to repay the ten dollars they had borrowed.

Lim Ah Fook (which is Lim the Lucky) lived in T. Square Township, Lot No. 121. His house and those of his neighbours were twenty feet by one hundred and twenty, neither more nor less. From the covered side-walk on his side of the way to the covered side-walk on the other side, the road was sixty feet broad to an inch. Shady trees flanked the road, spreading their branches in accordance with the bye-laws of the Sanitary Board. At each end of the street where the boundary stones marked its limit, cross-roads ran similar to it in all respects; and at right angles to these and parallel with that, each to each, ran other streets with the same white-washed houses and covered footways, and the same traffic of bullock-carts and *rickishas*. It is the town of the yard-measure, where everything is as new as a mushroom and

as true as a contract surveyor can chain it out; and at the next turning but one it ends abruptly in the Kling Coolie Lines, where the inmates share the cow-dung floor with the cattle that supplied it, and the children play mother-naked in the mud before the door.

But though the house of Lim the Lucky was exactly like his neighbour's, it was better known than most, and well known to the jaded *rickisha*-puller whom our Malays chartered by Abdullah's happy suggestion: "It will be in no wise a loss; the Towkay<sup>1</sup> can pay." Set down before his house they took their courage in their hands and stepped diffidently through the open door into the entrance-hall. "You do the talking," Youp whispered as they went in.

Lim the Fortunate One, the great mine-owner, Visiting Justice, Member of the Sanitary Board, came of a peasant family in the Canton province, Hakkas from the Prefecture of Ka-Yin, north of Swatow. Forty years ago the Taiping rebellion was in full blast in those districts, and between rebels and the government the Lims and their neighbours were hardly pressed. In the end, one side or the other made a clean sweep of the valley of the Lims (traces of the mud walls of their homesteads may be seen to this day), leaving neither woman nor buffalo to till the rice-fields, nor a man, nor a child. Lim the Lucky, so he used to say, alone escaped with a whole skin, by what means is foreign to this story, and found his way to Swatow first, and then to Hong Kong. Thence he was advised to seek a home abroad; and knowing nothing of what lay before him was brought to Penang, and from Penang across to the mainland; and so, by shallow and tangled water-

<sup>1</sup> The ordinary title of prosperous Chinamen throughout the Straits Settlements.

courses, through the dark silences of the jungle into the uplands of Perak. There he and a score of others dug up and washed the surface tin, paying to some Malay princeling (on so much as they could not smuggle past his custom-house) as much as he chose to demand. All this was before the white men came.

Then after some years there was rumour of war and talk of battles won against the infidels; and again after many days there was a gleam of red-coats passing through the jungle.<sup>1</sup> Lim's fellow-countrymen, for the most part, fled or were murdered; but he held on and lived. Another interval, and there appeared a white man who built himself a house, even there in the wilds, and informed all who cared to hear that the white man's law must prevail, and that he had come there to enforce it. This was the turning point of Lim the Lucky's career, when, by one of those instinctive strokes of genius that mark the successful man, in spite of the scoffs and threats of the Malays around him, he sought out the newly appointed Assistant-Magistrate, and threw in his lot with civilisation. And when, in course of time, bridle-paths had spread themselves over the land; and later when metalled roads had superseded the once boasted paths; and last of all when a railway had cut through the hills which the bridle-paths had been content to climb and the cart-roads to circumvent, years after the pioneer magistrate had retired to enjoy his pension at home, while his successors, less knowing in the lore of Malaya but deeply versed in Addison ON CONTRACTS, stirred up the ant-eaten records and laughed at the rough-and-ready old decisions,—while all these

changes were taking place, Lim remained steadfast on the winning side.

And now, at the time of our story, to the Chinamen Lim Ah Fook was a Chinaman, mildly contemptuous of all alien modes of thought and conduct, but at the same time a staunch upholder of constituted authority. To the English he was a sporting old gentleman always ready with his fifty dollar note for the Towkay cup at race-time; but perhaps, if we could have won to his inmost thoughts, we should have found that, though he liked us very well, he was weary of our ways, tired of driving a carriage and pair and lending it to his barbarian friends; and that his heart's longing was to make just one more lucky speculation, and then to go home to the old land, and there to rebuild the old homestead where his forefathers lived, and there to be buried with them on a lucky site, where his son and his son's son should duly worship at his grave. But in spite of the last pious consideration, his son was regularly sent by him to the school established by the Strictly Undenominational Association in T. Square Town; probably in the belief that if with the English and ciphering (undoubted helps to a man through life) anything of the foreign religion should attach itself for the time to the lad's mind, the alien growth would take no firm root there, and would soon drop off again when his school-days were finished.

Our two Malays, as we have said, went in and squatted down on their heels on the middle of the red-tiled floor, like a pair of dusty toads about to hop. "What do you want?" asked Lim the Lucky from his chair. Youp, smitten by the abruptness of the question, could only signal over his shoulder for his nephew's support with a foolish and appealing smile. Abdullah, more prompt, drew in his

<sup>1</sup> The Perak War of 1875, which resulted in the country being reduced to the position of a Protected State.

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breath and ejaculated, "Anu, what d'ye call it?" The Towkay waited for something more definite, and at last Youp, with an effort, said in a stage whisper, "Perhaps the Towkay would buy our *gutta*," and made as if he would undo the bundle on his back. "Ah, he wouldn't buy," Abdullah answered, following his lead.

The Towkay waited, his sharp black eyes peering out through their setting of crows'-feet, wrinkled in a long experience of the ways of men. He lit his little water-pipe and puffed thrice, detached the bowl, and blew out the ash. Then he relit it in a leisurely manner. The silence grew embarrassing. "*Bilang-lah!* ah, tell him," Youp murmured in tones as hushed and sweet as a lullaby. "Anu," Abdullah repeated with an effort, "Anu, Towkay. . . . There is a little matter. *Na!* Look, Towkay!" Here he produced the tin-seeds wrapped up in a piece of green plantain-leaf. "We found it, we two men, and a *tahil* of ore in every cocoanut-shell of dirt. And then, says I, wondrous beautiful tin-seed indeed is this. And then, says he, it would be right to give it to the Towkay." "Where did you get it?" asked Lim the Lucky. "Nun, over there," quoth Abdullah, pointing, as a Malay will, with extended chin, through a vague half of the horizon. "How far away?" "Not far; peradventure rather near by. Is it not so?" And Youp grinned his assent.

But it would be beyond all reasonable limits to tell by what arguments the Malays persuaded the speculative Chinaman to enter into partnership with themselves on the land, to deposit the survey-fees, pay the land-rent, and bear all charges in connection with the said land. It must be imagined how they went together to the Land Officer sitting at receipt of custom,

hot and flushed in the cool white office. To him Lim paid the amount demanded without a question, while Abdullah returned five times to make quite sure that his name had not been fraudulently omitted from the application-form.

So in due course the land was inspected, and a perspiring surveyor, with demarcation coolies and a theodolite, drove the outraged monkey-people trooping up the mountain. The partners were put in possession, and Lim, having prospected his land, found it rich beyond his hopes and bought out his partners. These spent their new-won fortunes as fate directed. Youp went on the great pilgrimage and died of cholera by a well-side at Mecca; but Abdullah married a new wife, and invested in a red plush cap and a pair of blue silk drawers, and is on the high road to become a man of dignity and consequence. Last came D. the expert, who tells the Government why the tin is found where it is found; and he reported on the new field with grudging praise and gloomy prophecies. But all, who were not experts, agreed that if D. had been one of Joshua's spies he would have brought back a depressing report of the Promised Land; and so no one heeded him.

We make no pretence to have come by the whole of what we have here tried to describe, by the evidence of our own eyes and ears. On the contrary it will be obvious that we have cobbled together shreds of information so collected with patches of guess-work, for the crudeness of which we ask the indulgence of the reader, who will bear in mind how difficult it is for a European, though living in the country and grown more or less familiar with its language, to arrive at any real insight into the inner chambers of an Oriental mind.

Our proper knowledge of the Ara Tiga mine dates from a day when, in company with old Towkay Lim, we paid it a visit of inspection some two years ago. We dropped down the river in a dug-out, one afternoon, to a point whence his tin was sent downstream to Anson's Bay, the port from which the tin of the Perak River districts is brought to Singapore. From this point we walked to the mine, over a four-mile track that Lim had cut through the forest. The bullock-carts with slabs of tin, that we met as they ploughed through the heavy way or over the still green branches with which the worst quags were corduroyed, were enough to show that the mine was flourishing. But before we reached the clearing, the drum had called the coolies to their evening rice : an endless procession of flying foxes was passing across the afterglow on the way to their breakfast of fruit ; and it was too late to do more that night than wonder, over a cigar, at the change that had befallen the jungle. What did the woodland spirits think of it all, their silences disturbed, their trees cut down, and five hundred foreign Vandals intruded into their haunts ; and what of the donkey-engine puffing red sparks into the moonlight, as it gasped the water from the pit ? What would the Orang Bunyi say, the Good Folk that are Heard ? Would they decimate the Chinamen with shivering malaria ; or bewitch the tin-sand, and trick the silly miner into throwing it aside for worthless *amang* ?<sup>1</sup>

But by daylight there is nothing romantic in a Perak tin-mine ; only a sort of pitifulness in the sight of so much honest timber cut down and burned to no useful enriching of the land, such as results, for example,

<sup>1</sup> *Amang* is the Malay term for a fine black sand often found with the tin.

when a garden of coffee grows green and bushy out of the decay of the slaughtered forest. The jungle has been felled over a rectangle as big, say, as Trafalgar Square, while beyond the sharp-cut boundary lines it stands intact, in a hollow square of tree-trunks that run down smooth and naked from their gray tops of foliage to the ground. The starved undergrowths have not yet had time to take full advantage of the sudden inrush of sunlight, and give to their spindle stems a lustier development. But the border line between forest and clearing has already been planted with bush grasses, icy cold with dew of a morning before the sun has dried them ; and before two years are over, broadening patches of *nipah* palms, and flat-leafed tree-ferns, and giant *caladia* with fleshy leaves, and travelling tangles of *rattan* and creeper, will be banked fifty feet high against the forest edge.

At one end of the clearing are the Coolie Lines, or *kongsi*-houses, as we call them, being long sheds of split logs loosely wattled together and covered by a high peaked roof of palm-leaf. Here live the miners, each gang under its headman. There are half-a-dozen of these lines, each perhaps forty yards long. Ducks and swine grope in the mud of the uncleanly alleys between them for a livelihood. Some Malay must lately have brought in a crate of *duriens*, for spiky husks (like those of a horse-chestnut, as big as a thirty-six pound shot), are lying in heaps on every side, and putrify the morning air with their stench ; a patch of garden ground in a corner gives contrast by its neatness and clear colours to the dirt and squalor around, and exhibits its cabbages and onions and many other vegetables in geometrical rows and beds. Here somebody, naked but for a pair of patched blue drawers, his pig-tail twisted



round his head, is watering the plants with some odious decoction.

Towkay Lim conveyed us through this pestilential village to the mine, which was towards the centre of the clearing, by a path wandering among the heaps of refuse thrown aside before the pay-dirt below could be won. We were then at the very spot where the Malays first struck the tin. The bed of the stream was gone, and its waters were doing hard labour at the wash-boxes; but there were the three great fig-trees to mark the place, with the sand heaped within their ring of shadow up to the column of aerial roots, and desecrated by an incongruous altar and a daily fusillade of crackers. For the Chinese coolie has a firm belief in the Malay devils' devils.

And so we came to the edge of the mine, or paddock as it is called, which after all is nothing but a broad open pit with sloping sides, and perhaps some forty or fifty feet in depth; a poor thing in the eyes of any one expecting shafts and machinery, and the elaboration of western methods, but sufficient for its purpose, as Chinese methods are apt to be. Three hundred men clad in loose blue coats and drawers, and plaited sun-hats three feet across, are digging up the pay-dirt at the bottom of the pit with great hoes, and putting it on flat wicker baskets; others catch up the baskets, slung one at either end of a yoke, and balancing the load across the shoulder, they carry them up to the level ground (vibrating in time with their steps) by narrow tree-trunks, notched with foot-holes, which are placed at short intervals athwart the sloping sides of the pit. Having gained the higher level, they throw down their burdens by the wash-boxes and descend by other bridges at a steady trot, in a silent, orderly, and unbroken stream. The men at the wash-boxes, which

are long sloping troughs of wood, throw in the dirt, and by raking it back and back under a nicely regulated flow of water, they separate the black tin sand from the spoil, and shovel it into tubs ready for the smelting-house, while the spoil is flung down the slope of the hither side of the paddock. At the opposite side a gang is removing tree-stumps and clearing the surface ready to be nibbled away in that direction; and by this process, slowly and day by day, the paddock will creep across the clearing, leaving no tin behind it worth the washing between the topsoil and the bed-rock. In the meanwhile, here and there, in the remoter corners of the clearing, little curls of smoke rise among the prostrate trees, showing where the burners are engaged in the twofold operation of getting rid of the felled jungle and preparing charcoal for the smelting-house. The engine we heard the night before is sucking up the accumulation of water from the pit's bottom, where it is a hindrance, and passing it to its sphere of usefulness at the wash-boxes. The constant rhythm of its vibrations seems to harmonise well with the orderliness of the scene. There is little or no talking; every band of coolies works in its own place, knowing with what a fury of wielded hoes it would be greeted should it stray by a foot beyond the hanging thread that marks its province; for the laws of the mining commonwealth are strict, and in some respects they are as quaint as they are strict. Towkay Lim would be as likely to call us a foreign devil to our face as to outrage the tin-sprites and his own coolies by going down his mine with black shoes on. Should a hoe slip in unlucky hands, the coolie must speak of the *fortunate* oozing from the wounded foot, never of *blood*; to use that word

would be to make himself unpopular, and it is ill to be unpopular in a mining town.

At nine o'clock the breakfast-gong sounds its welcome rattle. Down go hoe and basket, and away swarm the men up the narrow gangways like a swarm of ants along so many straws. They run off with laughter and horse-play and shrill cries. No taciturn, unimpressible stoics these, as some have crudely fancied, hastily ascribing to a whole nation the mannerisms of their domestic servants; no patient slaves, but a rough pack of adventurers, who when they have struck rich soil can tell to a cent the value of their nine-tenths' share of the output, and who are quite ready to spend what they win in such luxuries as they know of. So they revel in fowl and pork, take as many holidays as they please, gamble, drink, smoke *chandu*, and are as noisy and riotous as they dare to be. Light come, light go; a short life and a merry is the word.

They have come together from the breadth of two provinces; and half a thousand families scattered over Kwang-Tung and Fuhkien are daily wondering at their whereabouts, and waiting for their return. So that if nothing human is alien from our sympathies, we shall find more in the mine to interest us than kaolin and stannic-oxide and granite detritus mixed together in an ugly hole; if indeed anything can be ugly under a tropical sun, that, like a philosopher's stone, turns all it touches into precious metal, subliming drabs and grays into burnished silver, and the dingiest brown into old gold.

The same sun has, besides, the property of striking a man under the eaves of his pith-hat with its slanting rays, to much the same effect as when a poacher breaks the neck of a snared rabbit with the edge of his hand. So

we turned our backs on the now deserted mine, and made our way to the smelting-shed, where the furnace, a pot-bellied monster of clay like a water-butt, belched forth a column of blue flame each time the man at the six-foot piston-rod of the bellows ran with it to or fro. It straddled on three iron legs over a hole, into which the outcome of the ore and charcoal it was fed with flowed in a dribble of white-hot tin. This, as fast as it fell, was baled away by the streaming workmen into moulds, from which, as it cooled, it emerged in ingots of a hundredweight apiece.

Outside the shed these ingots were being laded into the bullock-carts, under charge of a Sikh watchman, all whiskers and severity, who was pleased to salute the Sahib and address him in the high, weak voice of his kind. And after their kind cringed the black Kling cartmen, in a humility of oil and nakedness. A chance Malay, with heads of Indian corn for sale, squatted on his heels and surveyed us with half-open eyes and mouth, from the standpoint of one who is willing to admire any show so it be free. And the busy Chinese *shroff* told his slabs into the cart without twice regarding either his employer or us. So we stood, representing five races from over half the world, drawn by the Spirit of the Tin together for a moment into that remote corner of the Malay Peninsula.

Presently the cart was laden. With blows and curses the reluctant bullocks were pushed sideways under the yoke. "*Da!*" cried the driver, and the cart creaked off on its way, with much labouring and wallowing among the heaps of sand. It was time for us also to go. "Towkay, we are going home; *Tabek* (farewell), Towkay," said we, as we shook hands. But as we turned the corner he made a shift to run after us, shaking and

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grinning all over his fat person. "Tuan,"<sup>1</sup> I said he, "I ask for help a little. Really they ought to metal a road for me next year. Then, perhaps, if my luck holds good, I shall go home," said Lim the Lucky.

Soon afterwards we had occasion to leave the Straits for the best part of two years, and Towkay Lim and his tin-mine passed away from our memory, or at any rate from our thoughts. When we came back, D. the prophet was one of the first men we happened upon; and of him, stirred by association of ideas, we asked the latest news of the mine at Ara Tiga. D. started, "You don't mean old What's-his-name's?" says he. "Why that reverted to Government years ago! It could not pay. It was patchy; it was bound to be patchy, so far from the hills. I put that on paper at the beginning." This he added with a sort of grim ecstasy.

And then we learned that Lim the Lucky had also reverted, or, as a Malay would put it, had returned to the compassion of God. So, because life in the far East is too full of changes and chances for much mourning over dead men or dead mines, we confess that in all probability we should have thought little more of poor old Lim and his last venture had not fate, and a coffee-planter prowling for land, brought us not long after upon the old road to Ara Tiga (still discernible, but man-high in underwood), and we were led by curiosity to see what traces might be left of the abandoned works.

<sup>1</sup> Tuan is the word ordinarily used in addressing Europeans in the Malay Peninsula.

The *kongsis*-houses, all but one, lay prone on the earth, half hidden by a nursery of scrub and saplings. The patch of garden had been ploughed by the wild-pig and replanted by the jungle with its own seed. The floor of the one remaining shed was green with weeds, and the sunshine was streaming on it through the broken roof in uneven patches. As we stood there, a bronzed and burnished lizard rustled past us, flickered across the light, and vanished in a corner. Some framework fixtures of the sleeping-benches were left, and there was still the old tablet to the Dragon. But the powers of the jungle had proved greater than he, from the white ant that had eaten the heart out of the timbers, to the elephant that had brushed them down with the friction of his rugged sides.

The sand-heaps before the mine were hidden under coarse grass, yellow in the sunshine, and the paddock itself was half full of sea-green water, into which a little tortoise, resenting our approach, dropped with a hollow splash. The hush of the jungle, that silence audible, with its infinity of faint sounds, lay heavy on the day. The cicadas chirruped their endless song: an invisible frog at our feet croaked suddenly and then stopped, as if on second thoughts he preferred to keep his ideas to himself; and the melancholy bird, that knows four notes of the scale and gets too sharp at the fourth and tries again, was engaged in a mournful competition with the one that can whistle two bars only of the QUEEN OF MY HEART waltz. The jungle is a ghostly place even at mid-day.

## UNFINISHED BOOKS.

BROWSING among one's books in a desultory fashion is frequently one of the most enjoyable of employments, but like all delights there is a tinge of melancholy in it. The sources of gladness and of tears are strangely near, and bookish reveries are often productive of

That sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

We scan the path along which the great ones of thought and speech have journeyed while they were allowed to remain with us, and we can trace the footprints they have left. There are footprints steady and undisturbed making straight for a certain goal; others hasty and impetuous, stumbling, and with blurred and confused impression; some wandering and feeble, irresolute and slow, circling vainly on the sands of Time and finally becoming so faint as to leave no indelible trace; and some imprinted red with the blood of a broken life.

And here and there we find on the trodden pathway a scroll unfinished, thrown down, perhaps, with a line half written when the writer was called away. The world, we know, is full of broken columns; and the smaller world of letters is full also of treasured fragments, beginnings without an end, imperfect embodiments of great conceptions.

It seems strange that we should regard *THE FAIRY QUEEN* as a fragment; yet so it is, a colossal fragment. Of course there is a sense in which each of its books is almost complete in itself, and the line of the poet's allegory is not so straight and sequacious as to suffer much by interruption;

indeed *THE FAIRY QUEEN* is quite as much a whole as most long poems, but this does not alter the fact that it is but a partial carrying out of a gigantic undertaking, whose great end was, to use the poet's own words, "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline."

When in 1590 he published the first three books of his great work, Spenser gave in an introductory letter a kind of prospectus of the whole poem: "*THE FAIRY QUEEN* disposed into twelve books fashioning twelve moral virtues." After showing that he was following the example of "all the antique poets historical," Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, and Tasso, he goes on: "I labour to pourtray in Arthur before he was king the image of a brave knight perfected in the twelve private moral virtues as Aristotle hath devised, the which is the purpose of these first twelve books." This scheme, dealing with "that part which they in philosophy call *Ethic*," was, one would think, a sufficiently large undertaking for one man to attack, but Spenser's sanguine nature went still further. If "I find these first twelve books to be well accepted," he says, "I may be perhaps encouraged to frame the other part of politic virtues, in his person [Arthur's] after that he came to be king."

Here is a plan indeed, worthy of the days of the Saurians of English poetry, as Mr. Lowell described them, which "lie floating many a rood" in our early literature. Twelve on the ethical and probably twelve on the political side of the character, in all twenty-four books,—surely a plan well nigh impossible of accomplishment.

When the lines of this vast enterprise were laid down the poet produced three books as an earnest of what was to follow. These, and a second instalment of three books six years later, were all that he was fated to leave us. It is true there is a tradition, born many years after Spenser's death, that the remaining six books (of the ethical part) were completed, but burned in the flames that destroyed Kilcolman Castle, or lost in the anxiety and tumult of the poet's flight from an insurgent country; and it is very possible that at least a portion of them was finished in the two years that elapsed between the publication of the second three books and his death; but whether unwritten, or written and lost, there remain to us only two cantos of the seventh book, published in 1611, twelve years after Spenser had left for ever the worries and the dangers and the poetry of life. That he intended to carry out his design to the end, if spared to do so, we can gather from several references in his works, notably from his eightieth sonnet, which begins:

After so long a race as I have run  
Through Fairy land, which those six  
books compile,  
Give leave to rest me being half fordone  
And gather to myself new breath awhile.  
Then, as a steed refreshed after toil,  
Out of my prison I will break anew;  
And stoutly will that second work assoyle  
With strong endeavour and attention due.

We can fancy that Spenser must have thought wistfully of that sonnet when he lay dying on a tavern-bed in Westminster, poor and comparatively neglected, leaving his song half sung and his reputation to the mercy of the Blatant Beast of which he himself had said,

Nor spareth he the gentle poet's rhyme  
But rends without regard of person or  
of time.

There are several examples of authors

having conceived an idea of such magnitude that it became hopeless for a single hand to accomplish it. Raleigh's great attempt at a History of the World is of this nature. Although he toiled at it for years in all the retirement and quiet that the Tower of London afforded, and although, as Jonson hinted to Drummond, he was assisted by some of the ablest writers of the time, he was still unable to bring the narrative quite down to the commencement of the Christian era.

The work to which Buckle devoted his life is another case in point. His aim was to trace the History of Civilisation, and from an early age he set himself to that stupendous undertaking. For twenty years he worked, in silence and unknown, and then published three volumes which at once raised him from obscurity to the position he deserved. But his book, though long, was only an introduction to his great scheme, a mere study for the important picture he had planned. Yet it was all that he was destined to perform. Worn out by his efforts he went to the East in search of fresh vigour, and passed away at Damascus, exclaiming, in his last moments of consciousness, "My book, my book! I shall never finish my book!"

The reason why Macaulay's History embraces so small a portion of our country's annals is not only that the scale on which he worked was so large as to admit of no other result, but also that it was not undertaken until comparatively late in life. An intensely active career, divided between literature and the business of the State, had been spent before he had leisure and means sufficient to enable him to devote himself to this single work. His life had been passed in the accumulation of a stock of learning so rich and so vast that his history, if it had extended over two or three more reigns, would have been

one of the wonders of the world. Even as it stands, and in spite of all the charges levelled at it, it remains a magnificent fragment.

Although Macaulay was born in 1800, it was not until the close of 1848 that the first two volumes of his *History* appeared. The next two followed seven years later, the length of the interval being easily explained by the prodigious amount of labour and research needed to fashion the narrative as we now possess it. There is an entry in his diary, dated February 8th, 1849, that is very interesting in this connection. He is laying down the lines which he means to follow in working up to the next stage of his *History*, and he says :

I have now made up my mind to change my plan about my *History*. I will first set myself to know the whole subject : to get by reading and travelling a full acquaintance with William's reign. I reckon that it will take me eighteen months to do this. I must visit Holland, Belgium, Scotland, Ireland, France. The Dutch archives and French archives must be ransacked. . . . I must see Londonderry, the Boyne, Aghrim, Limerick, Kinsale, Namur again, Landen, Steinkirk. I must turn over hundreds, thousands of pamphlets. Lambeth, the Bodleian, and the other Oxford Libraries, the Devonshire papers, the British Museum must be explored and notes made ; and then I shall go to work. When the materials are ready and the *History* mapped out in my mind, I ought easily to write on an average two of my pages daily. In two years from the time I begin writing I shall have more than finished my second part. Then I reckon a year for polishing, retouching, and printing. This brings me to the autumn of 1853.

The estimated time was exceeded by two years. Although, like Raleigh, he laboured terribly, although he practically absented himself from society, although he abandoned all correspondence save with his family, and at last had not leisure even for his diary, the materials to be collected

were so vast that the third and fourth volumes occupied him for seven years. He himself said that his *History* gave him so much to do that he had no leisure and little inclination for anything else : " I am a prisoner to my room, or nearly so. I do nothing but write and read." But his devotion to his book was not without its reward, and on November 21st, 1855, he could write : " I looked over and sent off the last twenty pages. My work is done, thank God ; and now for the result."

But his work was not done yet, although the strain had told severely on his physical powers. Almost a year elapsed between the publication of the second part and the commencement of the third. This was not like the Macaulay of the old days, who had no sooner finished one work than he was ready stripped for its successor. At last in October, 1856, he settled down again in earnest, though doubtful enough in his mind as to the conclusion. " God knows," he writes, " whether I shall ever finish this part. I begin it with little heart or hope ; " and again a few months later : " I find it difficult to settle to my work. . . . The chief reason I believe is the great doubt I feel whether I shall live long enough to finish another volume of my book." He had hoped to bring his account at least to the end of the reign of Anne, but his imperious mind had to give way to physical weakness, and he was obliged to leave even William's reign incomplete.

Speaking of Buckle's great undertaking Macaulay once said that he was a man whom Bacon might have described as an anticipator, and the remark may serve to suggest another instance of a colossal attempt never brought to completion, Bacon's own *INSTAURATIO MAGNA*. Of the six books of which it was to consist only

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three were ever written, *THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING*, *NOVUM ORGANON*, and *HISTORIA NATURALIS ET EXPERIMENTALIS*. The other three remain in the limbo of projection. They were thus announced by the author: (4.) *LADDER OF THE UNDERSTANDING*. (5.) *PRECURSORS, OR ANTICIPATORS, OF THE SECOND PHILOSOPHY*. (6.) *SECOND PHILOSOPHY, OR ACTIVE SCIENCE*; and were introduced by him in very quaint style: "Francis of Verulam thought thus, and such is the method which he determined within himself, and which he thought it concerned the living and posterity to know." The invocation with which he closed his announcement one is tempted to quote in this connection if only for the sake of the beauty of the language in which it is couched:

May Thou therefore, O Father, who gavest the light of vision as the first-fruit of creation, and who hast spread over the fall of man the light of Thy understanding as the accomplishment of Thy works, guard and direct this work, which, issuing from Thy goodness, seeks in return Thy glory! When Thou hadst surveyed the works which Thy hands had wrought, all seemed good in Thy sight, and Thou restedst. But when man turned to the works of his hands, he found all vanity and vexation of spirit, and experienced no rest. If, however, we labour in Thy works, Thou wilt make us to partake of Thy vision and sabbath; we, therefore, humbly beseech Thee to strengthen our purpose, that Thou mayest be willing to endow Thy family of mankind with new gifts, through our hands, and the hands of those in whom Thou shalt implant the same spirit.

Bacon's curious account of an imaginary republic which he called *THE NEW ATLANTIS* is also left in an imperfect state.

But there are many works which do not owe their incomplete condition to the tremendous area which their plans embrace. Indolence or irresolution is often the reason why efforts begun in eager and flushed excitement

lose their charm over the author's mind and are allowed to lapse. The works of Gray afford one or two examples of this. Of his earliest work *AGRIPPINA*, which was to have been a tragedy in blank verse, he wrote rather less than two hundred lines. His friend West, to whom he submitted the manuscript, thought the style too antiquated, and Gray carried it no further. It was a different reason that led to the laying aside of the fragment beginning,

As sickly plants betray a niggard earth.

This poem, which labours under the depressing title *THE ALLIANCE OF EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT*, and of which only about a hundred lines were written, he did not finish (to use his own words to Norton Nicholls) "because he could not." When his friend expressed surprise at this he explained, "that he had been used to write only lyric poetry, in which, the poems being short, he had accustomed himself and was able to polish every part, and that the labour of this method in a long poem would be intolerable." The poem is not one of his best; but it has passages that make one wish he had imposed on himself the "intolerable" labour of finishing it.

Keats also left a considerable number of unfinished poems, though not through indolence, as was the case with Gray.

Cut was the branch that might have  
grown full straight,  
And burned was Apollo's laurel bough.

The most important of these, *HYPERION*, was thrown aside because of its "Miltonic inversions" and generally Miltonic cast, and not (as the publisher announced) because the public had pronounced unfavourably upon *ENDYMION*. Here again is a great canvas stretched out. The overthrow of the Saturnian gods by

the Olympian, and the wars of the Giants, offered sufficient material in all conscience for an epic; but Keats thought that the poem had grown too imitative and would have no more of it. It seems to be generally agreed that he was right, although there can be no question but that the fragment, as it stands, is essentially lofty and magnificent. To Byron it seemed "actually inspired by the Titans and as sublime as Æschylus." Perhaps if Keats, against his own convictions and better inspiration, had finished the poem, it might not have been so impressive as it is.

OF KING STEPHEN only three or four scenes were ever written, written in this case by Keats alone without the help of the friend who had provided the plot of *OTHO THE GREAT*, too little upon which to form an elaborate judgment of the poet's dramatic power, but enough to show that in that direction did not lie his predominant gifts. There is more left of the *CAP AND BELLS*, which is a kind of poetical burlesque. Keats called it a fairy tale, and Charles Brown (the friend aforesaid) says that it was begun without a plan and written "subject to future amendments and omissions." It is surprising that this piece, which he composed, we are told, with extreme facility, should have been begun just after the commencement of his fatal illness. Probably it was written to relieve a mind overstrained, to get away, as Lord Houghton has said, as far as possible "from the gross realities that occupied and tormented his existence." At any rate it is written in a jaunty, reckless tone, seemingly without any serious intent; it is probably the least valuable of any of his longer writings, although it contains, of course, several felicitous turns of thought and fancy.

HIS *EVE OF SAINT MARK* was begun at about the same time as *THE EVE*

OF SAINT AGNES; but while he completed the latter legend, the former was for some reason or other allowed to remain in a very fragmentary state. It is written in octosyllabic couplets, not one of his characteristic metres, and in its apparent simplicity and real richness occasionally recalls Coleridge's *CHRISTABEL*. The old tradition ran that whosoever watched at a church-porch after sunset on the Eve of Saint Mark, would see the appearances of such of his friends as were destined to ill-health during the following year. These apparitions entered the church; if they returned it was a sign that the persons they represented would recover, the length of their sojourn in the church betokening the duration and severity of the sickness; if they did not return, the sickness would be fatal. Taking this story as his motive, the poet began a description of a maiden named Bertha, living within sound of the chimes of an old cathedral, reading upon a Sabbath day the aforesaid legend from an ancient book,

A curious volume, patched and torn,  
That all day long from earliest morn  
Had taken captive her two eyes.

It is a delightful and tantalising fragment, marked by a reserve and simplicity such as Keats did not often care to exercise. The difference between its style and the sensuous, overflowing luxuriance of many of his poems can be seen from such lines as these.

Bertha arose, and read awhile  
With forehead 'gainst the window pane.  
Again she tried, and then again,  
Until the dusk eve left her dark  
Upon the legend of Saint Mark.  
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,  
She lifted up her soft warm chin,  
With aching neck and swimming eyes  
And dazed with saintly imag'ries.

All was silent, all was gloom,  
Abroad and in the homely room:  
Down she sat, poor cheated soul!  
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal;

Leaned forward, with bright drooping  
hair  
And slant book, full against the glare.  
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,  
Hovered about, a giant size,  
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair.

When we remember that he who could write graphically and simply like this could also use the broader touch and more lavish colours of *THE EVE OF SAINT AGNES* and *ENDYMION*, our admiration of his marvellous powers increases ten-fold, and with it our pity for what men call his premature death.

It is doubtful whether any number of years would have sufficed to finish *DON JUAN*. Indeed it is difficult to see how such a work ever could, in any circumstances, have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Byron might have written *finis* at the end of the twentieth or thirtieth canto if he had lived; but the poem could hardly have been finished in any other sense.

Nothing so difficult as a beginning  
In poetry, unless perhaps the end.

Its plan was so wide, the subjects dealt with so various, the changes of mood so many and so sudden, and the progress of the story so slight, that Byron was almost justified in saying in the middle of the twelfth canto:

But now I will begin my poem. 'Tis  
Perhaps a little strange, if not quite  
new,

That from the first of Cantos up to this  
I've not begun what we have to go  
through.

These first twelve books are merely  
flourishes,

Preludios, trying just a string or two  
Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure;  
And when so, you shall have the overture.

And again:

I thought, at setting off, about two dozen  
Cantos would do; but at Apollo's  
pleading,

If that my Pegasus should not be found-  
er'd,

I think to canter gently through a hun-  
dred.

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As a matter of fact he never proceeded beyond the sixteenth. He began the poem in Venice, the first canto being written towards the end of 1818, and the next three in the succeeding year. Then, at the solicitations of his female friends, and especially of the Countess Guiccioli (whose influence with him then was paramount), he laid aside for a time the story of "that horrid wearisome Don," and in September, 1820, could write to Murray about it in this strain: "I do not feel inclined to care further about Don Juan. What do you think a very pretty Italian lady said to me the other day? She had read it in the French, and paid me some compliments with due drawbacks upon it. I answered that what she said was true, but that I suspected it would live longer than Childe Harold. 'Ah, but' (said she), 'I would rather have the fame of Childe Harold for three years than an immortality of Don Juan.'" At a later date, however, he took up the manuscript again, "having obtained," as he told Murray, "a permission from my dictatress to continue it—provided always it was to be more guarded and decorous and sentimental in the continuation than in the commencement. How far these conditions have been fulfilled," he went on, "may be seen, perhaps, by and by; but the embargo was only taken off upon these stipulations." Certainly it was seen, but whether the dictatress remonstrated again is not known. Meanwhile the poem proceeded on its leisurely course, *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, as Campbell aptly described it, showing on every page how true was the poet's own criticism.

The fact is, that I have nothing  
plann'd,

Unless it were to be a moment merry,  
A novel word in my vocabulary.

Seven more cantos were added in 1822 at Pisa, and the remainder up

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to the sixteenth at Genoa in 1823. A few stanzas still remain in manuscript, concluding the interview between Juan and her frolic Grace Fitz-Fulke, and that ends it,—a poem of some sixteen thousand lines without the slightest indication of an approaching conclusion.

In turning next to Ben Jonson we write of a man far removed from Keats and Byron both by time and temper; but the suddenness of the transition will be less noticeable if, instead of thinking of the great Elizabethan as the dramatist of *THE POET-ASTER* and *BARTHOLOMEW FAIR*, we approach him as the poet of many exquisite lyrics and as the author of *THE SAD SHEPHERD*. This unfinished pastoral was found by his literary executors among his papers and published in its incompleteness. Two acts and the beginning of the third are all that we have, but they show Jonson at his best. In its nature, and its execution, it is far more poetical (using that word in a well understood sense) than most of his work. Outside his lyrics, indeed, it would not be easy to match the delicate charm of the lines in which Æglamour praises the fresh beauties of his love.

Earine,

Who had her very being, and her name,  
With the first knots or buddings of the  
spring,  
Born with the primrose and the violet,  
Or earliest roses blown;

or of these, again, where Jonson, borrowing something from Virgil, has employed a figure which has since obtained almost universal currency among our poets down to Tennyson:

Here was she wont to go! and here!  
and here!  
Just where those daisies, pinks, and  
violets grow:  
The world may find the Spring by  
following her;  
For other print her airy steps ne'er left.

Her treading would not bend a blade of  
grass,  
Or shake the downy blow-ball from his  
stalk!

But like the soft west wind she shot  
along,  
And where she went the flowers took  
thickest root.

It has been commonly supposed that this was the work of Jonson's last years, on the strength of a line in the prologue which refers to his having been a playwright for forty years. But the evidence is not, we think, conclusive; and it is certainly hard to believe this play to be the product of a palsied and bedridden old age. It is at least possible that *THE SAD SHEPHERD* may be a part of that pastoral entitled *THE MAY LORD*, which Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden he had written. According to this theory *THE MAY LORD* had perhaps been finished in prose by the time Jonson visited Drummond (we know he was in the habit of composing first in prose), and had been translated into verse only up to the point at which it now leaves off. Then for some cause it was put aside, and not taken up again by the poet until his old age, when he began to adapt it for the stage, inserted the line in the prologue,

He that hath feasted you these forty years,

and might perhaps have finished turning the prose outline into verse if death had not supervened. Of course there are objections that can be urged against this theory, otherwise it would not be a theory; but all things considered it appears to be no improbable solution of a difficult question.

Perhaps no one has obtained such a high reputation by reason of such fragmentary work as Coleridge. Not to speak of those poems which he only planned and never attempted to execute (and they are legion) there are still at least four important poems left in different stages of imperfection, *THE*

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THREE GRAVES, THE WANDERINGS OF CAIN, THE BALLAD OF THE DARK LADIE, and CHRISTABEL. One of these fragments gave Charles Lamb the hint for a joke at his friend's foible. In perhaps the most whimsical of all his delightful letters, to Manning in China, by way of upbraiding him for his long exile he affects to warn him that when he does return he must expect to see no more of the old familiar faces; Mary, Martin Burney, Godwin, Coleridge, Wordsworth,—all are gone. "Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the WANDERINGS OF CAIN in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion." Never was there a writer whose performances bore such a small proportion to his promises, and if he had carried out all his projects and filled in all his outlines, he would have been one of the most voluminous writers in the whole dynasty of poets.

One of the gravest charges that may be brought against Coleridge by a disciple is his persistent neglect of CHRISTABEL. Of the poem containing the story of that interesting maiden we have but two cantos or parts, the only two that were ever written, and these were not published until 1816. And yet, as Coleridge's preface informs us, the first part was actually written in 1797, and the second in 1800. He mentions this to clear himself from a charge of plagiarism, and to show that, though later in appearance, his poem was antecedent in date to the works of Scott and Byron composed in a similar metre, the first part at any rate having circulated in manuscript many years before its public appearance.

The paragraph in the aforesaid

preface is eminently characteristic of the author. "As in my very first conception of the tale," he writes, "I had the whole present to my mind with the wholeness no less than with the liveliness of a vision, I trust I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, *in the course of the present year.*" In the edition of 1828 the whole sentence was repeated with the exception of the words we have italicised. If, then, this was the case, why did he not finish it, or at least set himself to the task? In opposition to Coleridge's statement we have the evidence of Wordsworth, who declared that in his belief the author had never "conceived in his own mind any definite plan for it . . . he had never heard from him any plan for finishing it." Wordsworth did not doubt the sincerity of his friend when he asserted the contrary; "but," said he, "schemes of this sort passed rapidly and vividly through his mind, and so impressed him that he often fancied he had arranged things which really and upon trial proved to be mere embryos." That Wordsworth was right may be gathered from the fact that, while in the original preface Coleridge speaks of the plan as being quite perfected in his mind, he writes at another time: "If I should finish CHRISTABEL I should certainly extend it and give new characters and a greater number. . . . If a genial recurrence of the ray divine should occur for a few weeks I shall certainly attempt it. I had the whole of the two cantos in my mind before I began it." And yet again in 1833, the year before he died, he returns to the old subject: "The reason of my not finishing CHRISTABEL is not that I did not know how to do it, for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entirely from beginning to end in my mind; but I fear I could not carry out with

equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one."

Gillman gives a sketch of the remainder of the poem which he declares it was the intention of the poet to follow. In it is related how the supernatural Geraldine is obliged to cease the impersonation of the daughter of Lord Roland de Vaux, and changes her appearance to that of the absent accepted lover of Christabel. The Baron and his daughter, though uneasy, are both unsuspecting of the charm, and the marriage between Christabel and the serpent-woman is about to take place when the real suitor enters. Amid general consternation Geraldine disappears (like Lamia in Keats's poem), the castle-bell tolls, the voice of Christabel's mother is heard in fulfilment of the old prophecy, and the rightful marriage is celebrated. Whether this is the actual scheme that Coleridge had floating before his mind's eye can never be known; nor do we know exactly whether to regret that the poem was never finished. Certainly we should all regret a conclusion unworthy of the first two cantos. Lamb, indeed, was content with the first, and was afraid that any addition would spoil it: "I was very angry," he writes, "when I first heard that he had written a second canto, and that he intended to finish it." An attempt was made to complete it by another hand, in 1815, before the actual publication of the first parts; and another similar attempt appeared in *BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE* for June 1819, signed Morgan O'Doherty, and understood to be by Maginn. Coleridge says of it: "I laughed heartily at the continuation in *BLACKWOOD*. . . . I do not doubt that it gave more pleasure, and to a greater number, than a continuation by myself in the spirit of the first two cantos."

There is a touching instance of the suddenness with which an author is sometimes snatched away from his work in Goldsmith's *RETALIATION*; that brilliant series of mock epitaphs which hit off their subjects with a wit Pope might have envied, and a good-nature to which Pope can lay little claim. What would one not give, as Macaulay says, for sketches from the same hand of Johnson and Gibbon as happy and vivid as the sketches of Burke and Garrick! What a cruel fate has left the portrait of Sir Joshua unfinished!

Here Reynolds is laid, and to tell you  
my mind,

He has not left a wiser or better behind.  
His pencil was striking, resistless, and  
grand;

His manners were gentle, complying,  
and bland:

Still born to improve us in every part,  
His pencil our faces, his manners our  
heart.

To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly  
steering:

When they judged without skill he was  
still hard of hearing;

When they talked of their Raphaels,  
Correggios and stuff

He shifted his trumpet, and only took  
snuff.

By flattery unspoiled—

and then in the middle of the line the writer laid down the pen he was never to use again. Poor dear Goldsmith! One of the most lovable figures in all our literature, dead in the prime of his life and the heyday of his reputation! "Let not his faults be remembered; he was a very great man."

How swift, too, was the blow that struck Dickens down on that summer's day five and twenty years ago. Rich, happy, universally honoured, rejoicing in his prosperity and in his power of giving pleasure to others, he worked faithfully to the last. Towards the close of his life his labours as a novelist had been somewhat inter-



rupted, and from 1861, when GREAT EXPECTATIONS was completed, until 1870 only one novel had come from his busy pen, and that not one of the best. But in that latter year (or, rather, in the close of 1869) after months of the most untiring exertions, travelling, lecturing, and reading, he turned again to his true vocation, and began THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. There is no trace of fatigue in it, no sign of lessening vitality. He was working on the ground that he had made his own and he was happy in his work. On the morning of the 8th of June, 1870, he had been writing in the little *chalet* in the grounds of his house at Gad's Hill, writing cheerfully, hopefully. Contrary to his usual custom he had resumed work after lunch, and continued it through the greater part of the afternoon. Then he walked back to the house he was never again to leave alive. He had made an appointment with a friend in London for the following day, but it was never kept. By the evening of the 9th he was dead, leaving THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD a mystery still, though one, it may be, that does not need much unravelling.

Like his great predecessor Scott, Dickens died in harness, died as he lived and as he wished to die, honest, independent, and hard-working to the end. Scott, too, left a tale untold, THE SIEGE OF MALTA, written while he was on his last futile journey in search of health. Although a good part of this work was executed, it has never been published, and we must all re-echo Lockhart's hope that it never will be. Scott, at least, like Dickens, died in the presence of those he loved. Thackeray, the third of

the triad whose names are so mutually suggestive, bore his last struggle in solitude and passed away in the night, not without pain, an old gray-headed man of fifty-two. He had resigned the editorship of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE in 1862, though he continued to write regularly for it. In its columns, besides the delightful ROUNDABOUT PAPERS appeared THE ADVENTURES OF PHILIP, LOVEL THE WIDOWER, and that unfinished book which gives him a place in these pages. In the opinion of many DENIS DUVAL promised to rank with his best work, and he had certainly given more pains to it than he had always been willing, or able, to give in his later years. Unhappily but seven chapters had been completed when in the early hours of Christmas Eve, 1863, the great writer died. His death was almost as sudden as that of his friendly rival Dickens, who saw him only a week before the end and described him as being "cheerful and looking very bright."

Another and a more recent death has left the world of letters poorer, and drawn a word of pity from every part of the world. When Robert Louis Stevenson died at the end of 1894 there was left a vacant place that no one has shown himself quite capable of filling; and although it may be that only those who knew him well can fully appreciate his life and his worth, still there was general sympathy and sorrow when the news reached us of that sudden death, and of the lonely grave on the crest of a Samoan hill. He also has left books unfinished; works in the process of being moulded by his hand, and still waiting the final touches that they can never receive.

## THE FORTY DAYS.

It is winter in High Brittany, but winter clad in silver and pearl rather than cloaked in leaden purple flecked with snow, as it too often is at home across the water. For days, and sometimes for weeks, the weather keeps itself at stretch; there is no sun visible in all the shining dome of sky, no touch of gold in the even radiance that fills the air; sky and sea travel to meet each other in a tender haze of gray that, when one looks at it again, is not gray but a shadowy white that glistens and shines in a pale chill splendour. It is the clear colourlessness of water in light. The country is still, too; the woods very void of life, silent and desert; the trees purple in their masses, and variously blotched with orange and green of lichen, moss, and ivy. The fields are bare, in the hedgerows the autumn glow of red hip and haw is gone, and the birds have not begun to build. The touch of spring has not come yet to make the world quick; it is winter, but the farther edge of winter, in High Brittany.

And it is also Lent; that strange season which is now, and here, so full of contradictions, of memories, of the vestiges of dying custom, tradition, and faith, of gaiety and mourning, of habit and of indifference, that there is surely no other time of year that enfolds so much; no other time of year, perhaps, that has so much to tell, if one care to listen. Lent in Brittany is a quaint and ancient crone, wearing a mask that is half laughter, half tears, and below it the wrinkled face of the past.

Shrove Tuesday has gone by, with

its pancakes. In the old days, when fasting was more strictly practised than now, these were the last eggs eaten before the beginning of Lent, as the Easter eggs, gay with many colours, were the first eaten after it was ended. And though this is no longer the case, here, as with us across the water, only perhaps more universally, pancakes are made in every house down to the poorest; and as they are tossed in the pan the mother chants to a rambling fragment of Church music:

God sends pancakes  
To all good children;  
May the devil fly away with the bad ones!

While the children about her watch with a solemnity that is twofold, divided between an uneasy recollection of many small sins and a serious joy in pleasures to come, the thin yellow cakes leaping so merrily into the air. But Shrove Tuesday has never been a great day of Carnival, or Masking, here at St. Malo, as it is elsewhere; perhaps because the little town does not lightly give up workdays to frolic. The Masks take an airing on the Sunday before, Quinquagesima or *Dimanche-gras*, and come out again in crowds on the Sunday after, Pancake Sunday, as the Malouins call it; and indeed they are to be seen more or less on all the earlier Sundays of Lent up to Passion. But on Shrove Tuesday only a handful of children here and there deck themselves in such gauds as they can come by, with faces blackened with soot or masks cut out of paper, and much contentment, noise, and dirt. In Saint-Malo

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the shops have hung out pyramids of masks, beards, noses, and grotesque heads; the secondhand booths in the ancient Rue de Boyer,—where everything is sold, from sea-chests and sea-boots to wayside crosses and weather-worn wooden saints—are gaudy with hanging costumes and dominos of every shape and colour. On the quays outside the wall the roundabouts have taken up their places, and a dozen small stalls edge the side-walk; and by these signs one may know that Lent, the time of mourning, is about to begin. And upon Ash Wednesday, if one look close enough, one may see the ashes clinging to the hair of those who return, with the air of having more pressing business elsewhere, from early mass; the ashes, which are all that remain of last year's palms, that have been burnt upon the altar now that the year has come round again to Lent, and sprinkled by the priest upon the heads of the faithful.

But if one go to look for them, there are other signs also that Lent has come once more. In the meat-market, built on the ground where once the White Brotherhood of Saint John had its great soup-kitchen, called literally the Kettle of the Poor, in the meat-market where last week was a thronging crowd and stalls hung round with joints, or piled high with poultry, is now emptiness; there is only a knot of women at the far end about the butter-counter, who speak in spite of themselves with lowered voices. The crowd has moved on across the town, through the twilight of morning in the narrow streets and sudden splashes of inlet sunshine, to the fish-market; and there is noise enough and to spare, a continuous Babel of sound in which, surely, there is every possible note of the human voice, a rushing, rising whirl of speech and laughter that is as ceaseless and as indefinable as the sea. All Saint-

Malo is here, or has been, or will be here to-day; all Saint-Malo is bargaining, buying, gossiping and quarrelling at the pitch of all its voices, in a dense, struggling, importunate mass. It is Lent, and one must eat *maigre*; and fish, it too frequently happens, is neither plentiful nor cheap, and is not to be bought without a world of argument over the last *sou*. For on the one side there is Paris with her gaping mouth to be filled, and on the other the sea, churned by the north-westerly winds of winter round the uncountable rocks, and treacherous with sudden storm and fog.

It is worth while on a market-day in Lent to spend an hour in the Place de la Poissonnerie. Here is more to be seen of the life of Saint-Malo and the Clos-Poulet than anywhere else. Here are the people of the town, the ladies above and the ladies below, as an old song calls them, alluding to those who live in the upper flats and who, if not too high up, represent the richer *bourgeoisie*; and those who live below, on the ground floor, that is in the shops. Here are the servants from Dinard and from Paramé, in white caps and aprons, with their big baskets; here are peasants from all the country-side, in the strange varying caps of their districts, and their winter cloaks, strange also, back-aprons as they call them, hanging wide and short and loose from a straight band tied about their shoulders. Here are men in blouses of every shade, from purple to white, or of black, or pink, curiously embroidered in colours; they wear high boots, and some, if it be cold enough, have short, shapeless coats of goatskin, brown or black or a grizzled yellow. Here are fish-sellers from Saint-Jacut, large-faced, simple, very broad in speech and quaint in habit; they make the sign of the Cross over their fish as they sell them, for is it

not Lent? And there are others from Cancale; tall, handsome, bold-eyed women, full-coloured and loose-lipped, with their coquettish caps poised on their shining black hair which is combed curiously into ridge and furrow over their brows; hot-tempered and muscular, as ready to fight as to flatter, and with an odd wheedling grace of glance and accent that changes on the least provocation to ferocity. They are sometimes, in their way, very splendid creatures; but on looking at them one understands the old Malouin saying, "When you bargain with a Cancaleise, have a good look on your door."

Round about the central fish-market, on the narrow pavement, there are baskets in an endless row, baskets of cockles, mussels, and whelks; of periwinkles, the old Lenten food of Saint-Malo, so popular that the spring-fair was called after them, and they have a fairy-tale all their own which Malouin mothers still tell their children; of sardines, fresh and salt, of *lançons*, a kind of sand-eel, and of crabs, which are not quite such as one usually sees in England, but of two sorts, the one spiny and the other growing a crop of black hair. And if in Lent one buys crabs one must make a difference between these two; the spiny ones must have the sign of the Cross made over them, but the hairy ones must be spat upon. And if you would know why this is so, and why there are no sardines on the Emerald coast, and why the sand-eels are called little lances, there are plenty of old peasant-women able and ready to explain, and to tell many other stories, too,—true stories all of them, "as true as it is Lent," as they will wind up. And the bells of the single steeple overhead ring out incessantly for one service after another; and the *cure's* housekeeper hurries off

homewards with the best fish in her basket, for who should have the best, if not the *cure*? And as the creels grow empty the fish-sellers once more make the sign of the Cross over them, and say to each other contentedly that it is a "good Lent."

But if, according to the Church, this is a time of fasting, it is also, and has been for more years than one can count, a season of gaiety, when the masks come out and the streets and quays of the grey town are motley with a fantastic crowd. Unlike most other places, where Carnival is riotous from Quinquagesima to Shrove Tuesday and re-appears for a single day at Mid-Lent, here at Saint-Malo Pancake Sunday, or the First Sunday in Lent, has always been the chiefest day for merriment and masking. The roundabouts are thronged with gaudy dominoes: the lottery-booths are surrounded with men and women in false heads and extraordinary disguise; and through the ancient gates of the town there is a continual coming and going of priest and punchinello, citizen and peasant, a long, changing, many-coloured stream that has yet been for centuries the same. But it is rather within the walls, in the narrow winding streets, that one looks most kindly upon the Carnival; as when, on one of these silver days of winter, a pale sunlight gilds the later afternoon and glances along the ancient Rue du Boyer. In the wide black archways the old-clothes' shops hang out fantastic garments for hire, yellow, red, or blue: across the narrow way, outside an arched and grated window, is a pile of masks and heads, hideous, grotesque, impossibly ruddy or lividly white, a heap of crude staring colour; in the street, which is barely wide enough to be called a street, is a gay crowd laughing, struggling, screaming, singing, clowns and jesters in gaudy red and green, tall black semina-

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rists, soldiers, sailors, peasants in blouses, white caps from all the country-side; and ever as a background the tottering houses on either side, which have looked down on such a sight year after year for three centuries. Scraps of the *Marseillaise* or of the latest ditty from Paris hum through the air. The bells ring for vespers; and the blue Sisters, with their huge white flapping *coiffes*, convoy long files of the quaintly-gowned town-orphans on their way to church.

The earlier Sundays of Lent had formerly their special customs and ceremonies, which have only of recent years fallen into disuse. Shooting the goose and shooting at the *papageai* were always Lenten sports, while running at the Quintain took place variously at Mid-Lent or on Easter Monday. On Pancake Sunday, till some twenty years ago, all Saint-Malo went out to the great beach to shoot the goose. In old times the bird was tethered alive by its head to a pole or peg fixed in the sand, and became the property of the man skilful enough to free it by severing its neck, which seldom happened till it had been quieted by successive wounds. If the winner was a poor man, he received along with the goose a few silver *sols*, which were called a Lenten gift; if rich, he was expected to give the town a sum to be divided among the sick or the needy. In more recent times, and till the sport fell into abeyance, the goose was a dead one, hung by its neck from a tall pole, and the Lenten gift had become a pitcher of cider, which the winner in return was expected to offer also to the other competitors. The game is very ancient, even more ancient than its fellow, the *papageai*, which was introduced to Saint-Malo by the good Duchess Anne herself, but which, for all her patronage, never became so dear to the people as their own goose-shooting. And yet the

*papageai* was a popular sport, and perhaps a more courtly one; and early in the fifteenth century it was no empty honour, during the first fortnight of Lent, to be King of the Papageai and decorated as such by the Duchess herself. The *papageai* was generally a pigeon roughly carved in wood and set up on the highest tower of the castle; and he who shot it away needed considerable skill, whether he used bow or arrow, as in the early days, or later a clumsy gun resting upon a high stand. Not only was the King decorated by the Duchess with a silver chain from which hung medals of all the former Kings of the Papageai, but he received also from the town an allowance during his year of royalty, which varied at different times from £60 to £100, a very considerable sum in those days; so that, one may repeat again, it was no empty honour some four hundred years ago to become King of the Papageai on Pancake Sunday. As to the quintain, it too is an ancient Lenten or Easter sport at Saint-Malo, where for centuries it was represented by a mannikin dressed as an English soldier; and indeed, though in a less picturesque form, it is popular still, but it is removed to the national holiday in July, and has no longer a share in the Easter merry-makings.<sup>1</sup>

Another ancient game proper to the Third Sunday in Lent was the *soule*, which is said to date back to a period beyond the Christian era. However that may be, the *soule* was

<sup>1</sup> The custom of shooting at the *papageai* was not peculiar to Saint-Malo. Perhaps it was one of the many importations which the French alliance brought into Scotland. Our readers will remember with what ceremony Lady Margaret Bellenden went to attend the Festival of the Popenjay in the county of Lanark on a May morning in the year 1679, and of the shock her pride received at the discomfiture of Goose Gibbie. Sir Walter says that the custom prevailed in Ayrshire down to his own time.

played everywhere, though less at Saint-Malo than in the country around, at this season of the year; and there seems reason to believe that the game had a certain religious character. The youngest bridegroom of the parish offered a garlanded *soule* (an inflated leather ball) to the church on the Third Sunday of Lent; and after it had lain during High Mass upon the altar, and had been specially blessed, it was given back to the parish for the traditional game. One remembers in this connection the Shrove-tide football so common in England; and the *soule* seems undoubtedly to have been closely akin to it. Its special peculiarity was that the game was originally played only, as it seems, on religious fasts and festivals, on the Third Sunday in Lent, on Saint John's Day, sometimes on the Fête-Dieu (Corpus Christi), when it always received a preliminary benediction at the altar; while its sole temporal use appears to have been as a traditional gift at Easter to the feudal lord of the district.

And Lent, the mourning season of the Church, is not only in High Brittany a time of gaiety, but also a time of much business. It is the season of fairs, and if fairs are a fine occasion for merry-making they always begin in a seriously commercial way. It is only after one has sold one's cows, shorn one's sheep, got rid of the cartful of little pink pigs or the sacks of corn or bundles of long slim fruit-trees,—only after an infinity of bargaining, wrangling and drinking (for no sale holds good till one has drunk upon it)—that one is ready to amuse oneself; which is so true that, though a fair may begin at six in the morning, it is only towards noon, when business slackens, that the shows and roundabouts open in a leisurely way. From the first week in Lent the fairs begin in a long succession;

without going far afield, one could find one for each of the Forty Days, even, as at Croisty, for Good Friday; and the famous fair of Dinan, called the Liège, runs through nearly the whole of Lent up to Palm Sunday.

At Saint-Malo itself the Saint-Ouine, as it is named, is held on the Sunday before Passion, though there is not much now remaining of the great spring assembly which has a history of its own during the centuries that it has existed. It has travelled in its time, the Saint-Ouine. It was once held within the walls, when it was called the Periwinkle Fair from the bowlfuls of periwinkles that were sold at it, or sometimes the Whistle Fair, because, it seems, of the innumerable whistles and trumpets and horns which children bought there four hundred years ago as they still buy them to-day; but it was turned out after the great fire in the sixteenth century, which burned half Saint-Malo to the ground. Then it betook itself to the island of the Grand Bey, where was then a chapel dedicated to Saint Ouen, or, as he was called by the people, Saint Ouine, about which the fair was held, and where the wives of Saint-Malo sailors prayed for fair winds to bring their men home, turning the chapel cross towards the quarter whence the wind should come, so that the saying arose, "As changeable as the cross of Saint-Ouine." Lastly, and not till the middle of this century, long after the last ruins of the chapel on the Grand Bey had been swept away or overgrown, the Saint-Ouine was transferred again to the broad quays outside the town, where it is now held every year on the Sunday before Passion. But its importance has gone from it, and even compared with its neighbours it is a poor thing indeed; from its ancestor, the great Whistle Fair, it has

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only inherited one quality, and that is noise.

They are all the same, these fairs or assemblies, in their degree: roundabouts, lotteries, innumerable varieties of gaming-tables, shooting-booths, and phonographs; small shows of inconceivable squalor where women, thin, unwashed, and half-starved, shiver in a hideous undress; tumblers, cheap-jacks; huge quaint baskets of the very ancient cakes of High Brittany, the *cracquelins*, and the *fouaces*, buckwheat cakes made not too cleanly on girdles over charcoal stoves, pans of steaming sausages: one does not fast nowadays with conviction. And in the midst of the noise, the crowding, the shooting, the gambling, the din of drums and cymbals and the braying of mechanical organs, there may be at the larger fairs such a show as the Passion, which is, according to its advertisement, "warmly recommended by the Cardinal-Archbishop"; and where the Passion of Christ is given in living pictures, and the audience, with a sprinkling of priests in it, looks on with a quiet and pleased attention, as far distant from indifference as from devotion. They do not applaud, neither do they criticise: they observe it with the same placid approval that they give to the *crèche* in their own church at Christmas; and one comes away presently with a memory of Roman soldiers, of Pontius Pilate on his high seat, of a pale slender Mary in blue and white, and of a central Figure; wondering that a thing that cannot be well done is done so little ill.

But already the gay days of Lent are over and it is the eve of Passion. To-night before Vespers in every church the crucifixes and the figures of Saints will be covered with long purple draperies. And, if one asks of the people why this is so, one is told with intense conviction that the Saints are all dead between

Passion and Easter, because *le bon Dieu* Himself died then. There is a certain impressiveness about the hanging veils of purple beneath which the statues are dimly outlined in a strangely human fashion; a certain solemnity in the absence of glitter and colour, save that of mourning, in these churches that are usually so full of rich and vivid brightness. There is a dramatic touch about it that calls to mind the old and close connection between religion and drama in the days when, for instance, a company of authors and actors took to themselves the name of the Brotherhood of the Passion and received from Charles the Sixth of France the exclusive right of playing sacred pieces in theatres or churches about the country. And long after this right had been rescinded the plays, in perhaps a simpler form, lingered among the people, lingered almost till to-day, if indeed in the by-ways of High or Low Brittany they do not still exist. At the village near Nantes called the Bourg de Batz the Passion was played regularly, under the name of the Tragedy, till some eighteen or twenty years ago; it was given in a disused chapel, and the priests of the parish, with the mace-bearer, the singing-men and the servers, attended in cassock and surplice. At many other places similar plays were popular during the first half of this century; and at a chapel near Saint-Servan, barely four miles from Saint-Malo, they are said to have been very finely presented no more than thirty years ago. But probably, if the Passion plays still exist anywhere, it will be in the form of corrupt and almost incoherent dialogues chanted by children who scarcely know what they are saying; as, in their season, the Christmas dramas have sunk into an unintelligible formula. But in Brittany another custom existed alongside with

the Miracle-play, and it has proved more long-lived. It was usual till very recently, even in Saint-Malo, to sing songs of the Passion from door to door as in England carols are sung at Christmas; and if the Pastoral or the Complaint, as it was called, has died out in the town, it is still alive, though dying fast, in the country. Here is one of these Complaints that was sung till a few years ago in the district; it is incomplete, but none of these songs are now more than fragments. This one, it is believed, has never been published, and it is rare to find one so coherent and so long; but a translation unfortunately gives little of its quaint uncouth charm, or of the pathos of the refrain.

We have come into your courts

Praises for to sing:

*The Passion of sweet Jesus,  
Dear God, but it was great!*

Jesus Christ did penitence,

Penitence for our sin.

*The Passion, etc.*

Forty days and forty nights

He took no meat;

*The Passion, etc.*

And at the end of the forty

So little would he eat;

*The Passion, etc.*

A little bread, a little wine,

An orange,—no more.

*The Passion, etc.*

Jesus Christ did not eat all,

He gave some to his Angels four;

*The Passion, etc.*

To Saint Peter and Saint Paul,

And Saint Michael with his sword.

*The Passion, etc.*

You will see on the Cross of Sorrow

The suffering of our Lord.

*The Passion, etc.*

You will see His dear arms

On the Cross spread wide;

*The Passion, etc.*

You will see His dear feet

Nailed side by side;

*The Passio i, etc.*

You will see His dear head

Crowned with white thorn;

*The Passion, etc.*

You will see His bleeding side

By the cruel lance torn.

*The Passion, etc.*

You will see the little birds

Dying upon the tree;

*The Passion, etc.*

Higher than the mountains

Will rise the angry sea . . . .

*The Passion of sweet Jesus,*

*Dear God, but it was great!*

When Palm Sunday comes High Brittany is at its devoutest. One takes to church a sprig of box or of laurel (the conventional palm) to have it blessed; and it is carried home again to be put in its place in front of the plaster Virgin, that is certainly above the fireplace or somewhere against the wall, till next Ash Wednesday comes round; when, as has been said before, it is burned upon the altar by the priest who presently "gives the ashes." Formerly sprigs of palm were stuck in the earth of garden or field to ensure fertility; but this, with much else that is quaint and graceful, has long died out. There is little now that is curious or particular in Holy Week. In the days when Saint-Malo was a cathedral town, and its Chapter as rich as it was haughty, it was the custom for the senior Canon to go in state to the Croix du Fief, or Bishop's Cross, where all Church proclamations were made, when the midday *angelus* was sounding on Holy Wednesday. As soon as the bells had ceased, the Canon, surrounded by his chaplain, his acolyte, and his four mace-bearers, read out the order of the Bishop and Chapter, that "all unclean Jews and other pagans should quit the town, under pain of the goad and whip, before the first sound of the evening *angelus*," with forbiddance of return before Easter Wednesday at midday, so that

during the holy time of Easter the town should not be "made vile and foul" by their presence within it. It may be added that it was not till so recently as 1708 that Saint-Malo, in taking in a new piece of ground, permitted the Jews to build themselves a quarter from which henceforward they were not turned out even during Holy Week. On this same day also, Holy Wednesday, at the office of the *Ténèbres*, a curious custom existed till the Revolution swept it away with so much else that was better worth preserving. At that passage in the Scriptures, read at this service, where mention is made of a great noise, not only did the priests overturn their stools, but the congregation (who had gone prepared) made a hideous din by rattling iron pots, metal bars, or anything else of the sort; which was, as a historian of the town quaintly observes, "a means whereby the faithful were encouraged to take part in the service."

On Good Friday (when, by the way, a special service is said and not a Mass, because, as the people explain, the *bon Dieu* is dead) it was till quite recently the invariable rule that women should go to church with the wings of their caps unstarched and hanging loose on their shoulders, in sign of mourning, as is still done in the country, and as widows wear them during the earliest days of their widowhood. And on this same day there is still no man so profane and impious as to stir or disturb the ground with any sort of tool: there are even many who will not do such work throughout Holy Week; and on this "grievous day" it is quite

certain that if touched the earth would open, groaning, in a bottomless gulf, and that all sorts of misfortune would follow. On Good Friday also, as all good Malouin children believe and know, the church-bells have flown to Rome, to be blessed by the Pope himself; and when they begin to ring again on Easter Eve one says with joy, "Ah, they have come safe home again!" One says it with joy, for when they come back from Rome their great metal skirts are full of beautiful eggs, red and green and yellow, that taste like no other eggs in the world; the eggs that in older times were carried to church on Easter Day to be blessed at High Mass by the priest.

And already in the corners of the country they are singing from door to door, as once they did here in Saint-Malo, the Easter Pastoral, the *Allelujah*, the Song of the Eggs:

I've a little bird in my breast,  
Not long has left the nest:  
So sweetly sings,  
So sweetly rings,  
*Allelujah!*

It is not very intelligible, but it serves its purpose; from house to house the sound of *Allelujah* is carried gaily, and from house to house the eggs are gathered in payment, till one's basket is full; for at Easter all the world is generous in High Brittany.

But Lent is over, the Forty Days are done; and with them winter has gone, and spring sits in the woods and the fields in all her bravery of primrose and green. The great festival of religion is the festival of spring, and winter is over. *Allelujah!*

THE WINGS OF A DOVE.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

A TALL lanky boy of about seventeen sate half-way down the great flight of steps at the eastern entrance of the Jumma Mosque at Delhi, looking anxiously at a cage full of *avitovats*, twinkling little brown birds with a suspicion of red amid their brown; flitting, slender, silent little birds, never still for a second. He looked at them half satisfied, half doubtful, and as he looked he turned a four-*anna* bit over and over in his brown fingers. For though he was dressed as a European his complexion was as dark as that of most high-caste natives, and darker by a good bit than that of a girl some one or two years his junior, who sate fondling a pigeon on a higher step, and looking askance, also, at the *avitovats*.

"The Huzoor can have them for five *annas* if he chooses," said the evil-looking bird-catcher who was squatting among his wares. Though he used the honorific title, his manner was absolutely devoid of courtesy, and he turned without the least change in it to address a friend in the parrot-line, who sate with his cages on the step above. For this particular flight of steps is set apart to the selling of birds, especially after prayer-time on Fridays, when the pigeon-racers and quail-fighters buy and bet in the wide portico of rosy stone and pale marble. The *avitovats*, they having no value to the sportsmen, commanded but a slack sale, so the boy had plenty of time in which to make up his mind; to judge by appearances a difficult task, for his face was undeniably

weak, though handsome, kindly, and soft. He wore a white drill suit, clean but sadly frayed; and his gray wideawake was many sizes too large for his small head. Perhaps it was the knowledge of this, combined with a vague suspicion that the hat knew quite as much about bird-fancying as the head within it, which made him, in his perplexity, take it off, place it on his slack knees and drop the four-*anna* piece into it, as if it had better decide the question. Sitting so, with bare head, he looked handsomer than ever, for its shape was that of a young Adonis. It was, in fact, the only thing about him, or his life, which corresponded with his name, Agamemnon Menelaus. The surname, Gibbs, used, after those eight resounding syllables, to come as a shock to the various chaplains who at various times had undertaken to look after young Gibbs's spiritual welfare. Some of them, the more experienced ones, acquiesced in that and many another anomaly after their first glance at his soft gentle face; for it was typical of that class of Eurasian which makes the soul of a chaplain sink within him. Others reached the same conclusion after a reference to the mother, Mrs. Gibbs. She was a very dark, pious woman, tearfully uncertain of all things save that she, being a widow, must be supported by charity, by the offertory for preference. She, however, made the problem of his name less intrusive by calling him Aggie as if he had been a girl.

"They are young birds, as the Huzoor could see for himself if he had eyes," went on the bird-catcher

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States.

with a yawn. "Next moulting they will be as red as a *rutti* seed. But it is five *annas*, not four."

Aggie had no lack of eyes outwardly; they were large and soft as velvet, and as they looked down at the *avitovats* showed a thick fringe of curling lashes. But there was an almost pathetic guilelessness in them, and one brown hand hesitated about his breast-pocket. He had another *anna* there, part of a monthly stipend of one rupee for attending the choir, which he had intended to spend on sweets, preserved pumpkins for choice; but the *avitovats*, with their promise of scarlet plumage, cozened his indolent, colour-loving eyes almost as much as the thought of the sweets did his palate. Should he, should he not? The mere sight of the birds was a strong point in their favour, and his hand had sought the inside of his pocket when a whisper met his ear. "Hens!" It was unmistakable, and he turned to look at the girl behind him. She was sitting on her heels, crunched up chin and knees, holding her pigeon close to her face as if to hide it. And as he turned she sidled further away along the step with the curious gliding shuffle peculiar to native girls and pigeons. "*Ka-boo-tri, ka-boo-tri, ka-boo-tri*," gurgled the pigeon, as if pleased at the motion. It was a blue-rock, showing a purple and green iridescence on the breast, and the girl's dress matched its colourings exactly; for her ragged cotton skirt had washed and worn to a dark neutral tint, and the shot-silk bodice, tattered and torn, with tarnished gold embroidery on its front, took gleams of a past glory from the sunlight. Her veil had faded in its folds to a sort of cinnamon brown, touched with blue, and both it and the bodice were many sizes too large for her slight childish figure.

"If the Huzoor is not to buy let

him give place to those who will," suggested the bird-catcher cavalierly. He had been too far to catch the whisper, and thought to clinch the bargain by a threat.

Agamemnon Menelaus looked at him nervously. "Are you sure they are young birds?" he suggested timidly. "They might,—they might be hens, you know." There was a half perceptible quiver of his handsome head as if to watch the girl. The bird-catcher broke out into violent asseverations, and Aggie's hand, out of sheer trepidation, went into his pocket again.

"Hens!" This time there was a ring almost of command in the tone, and Agamemnon obeyed it instinctively by rising to go. "*Ka-boo-tri, ka-boo-tri*," came the gurgle of the pigeon, or was it partly a chuckle from the girl as she sidled still further along the step?

"So! that is good riddance," said the bird-catcher to the parrot-seller, angrily. "God made the rainbow, but the devil made the dye-pot! Yet I thought I had sold them at last. He looked not so sharp as that."

The parrot-seller yawned. "'Twas Kabootri did it," he remarked with bland indifference. "She said 'hens.'"

The bird-catcher stared at him incredulously, then passed the look on to the girl who still sate with the crooning pigeon held close to her face.

"Kabootri!" he echoed with an uneasy laugh. "Nay, neighbour, 'twas she who told me but an hour ago that if I sold not something this Friday she would kill herself. 'Tis a trick of words she hath learned of her trade," he went on with a curious mixture of anger and approbation. "But it means something to a man who hath cursed luck and a daughter who has a rare knack of getting her own way."

The parrot-seller gave a pull at a *bulbul*-seller's pipe as if it were his

own. "Thou wilt be disgraced if thou give it her much longer, friend," he said calmly. "'Tis time she were limed and netted. And with no mother either to whack her!"

The uneasy laugh came again. "If the Nawab's pigeon wins we may see to a son-in-law; but she is a child still, neighbour, and a good daughter too, helping her father more than he helps her." There was a touch of real pride in his tone.

"She said 'hens'" retorted the parrot-seller. "Ask her if she did not."

"Kabootri! Kabootri!"

The call was a trifle tremulous, but the girl rose with alacrity, throwing the pigeon into the air with the deft hand of a practised racer as she did so. The bird was practised also, and without a flutter flew off into the blue like an arrow from a bow; then, as if confused by finding itself without a rival, wheeled circling round the rose-red pile till it settled on one of the marble cupolas.

"What is't, father?" she asked, standing on the upper steps and looking down on the two men. She was wonderfully fair with a little pointed chin, and a wide firm mouth curiously at variance with it, as were the big, broad, black eyebrows with the liquid softness of her eyes.

"Why didst say 'hens,' Kabootri?" replied her father, assuming the fact as the best way of discovering the truth, since her anger at unjust suspicion was always prompt.

"Why?" she echoed absently. "Why?" Then suddenly she smiled. "I don't know, father; but I did!"

The bird-catcher broke out into useless oaths. His daughter had the dove's name, but was no better than a peacock, a peacock in a thief's house; she had lost him five *annas* for nothing.

Kabootri's eyebrows looked ominous.

"Five *annas*! Fret not for five *annas*!" she echoed scornfully, turning on her heels towards the gateway; and flinging out her arms she began the pigeon's note, the pigeon's name and her own—"Ka-boo-tri, ka-boo-tri, ka-boo-tri!" It was as if a bird were calling to its mate, and the answer came quickly in the soft whirr of many wings as the blue-rocks, which live among the rose-red battlements and marble cupolas, wheeled down in lessening circles.

"Lo! there is Kabootri calling the pigeons," remarked an old gentleman, who was crossing citywards from the Fort; a stoutish gentleman, clothed immaculately in filmy white muslin with a pale pink inner turban folded across his forehead and showing triangularly beneath the white outer one. He was one of the richest bankers in Delhi; by religion a Jain, the sect to whom the destruction of life is the one unpardonable sin, and he gave a nervous glance at the distant figure on the steps.

"Nay, partner, she was in our street last week," put in his companion, who was dressed in similar fashion; "and Kabootri is not as the boys, who are ever at one with sparrows for a *pice* or two. She hath business in her, and a right feeling. She takes once and hath done with it, till the value is paid. The gift of the old bodice and shawl my house gave her kept us free for six months. Still, if thou art afraid, we can go round a bit."

Kabootri from her coign of vantage saw them sneaking off the main road, and smiled at their caution contemptuously; but what they had said was true; she had business in her, and right feeling. It was not their turn to pay; so, cuddling a captured pigeon to her breast, she set off in an opposite direction, threading the bazaars and alleys unerringly, and

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every now and again crooning her own name softly to the bird which, without a struggle, watched her with its onyx eyes, and called to her again.

"There is Kabootri with a pigeon," remarked the drug-seller at the corner to his clients, the leisurely folk with ailments who sit and suggest sherbets to each other, and go away finally to consult a soothsayer for a suitable day on which to take their little screw or phial of medicine. "She will be going to Sri Parasnâth's. It is a while since she was there, and Kabootri is just, for a bird-slayer."

Apparently he was right as to her purpose; for at the turn leading to Sri Parasnâth's place of business, she satle down on a step, and after a preliminary caress fastened a string deftly to one of the pigeon's feet. Then she caressed it a bit, stroking its head and crooning to it. Finally with a bound she started to her feet, flung it from her to flutter forlornly in the air, her level black eyebrows bent themselves downwards into a portentous frown, and her young voice rang out shrilly, almost savagely: "*Yahee, choori-yâh-mâr! Aihee, choori-yâh-mâr!* (Hillo, the bird-slayer! Hullo the bird-slayer!)"

"Look out, brother," said a fat old merchant in spectacles, who was poring over a ledger in the wooden balcony of an old house. "Look out and see who 'tis. If 'tis Kabootri, thou canst take eight annas from the box. She will not loose for less; but if 'tis a boy with sparrows, wait and bargain."

It was Kabootri, no doubt. Who else but she came like a young tiger-cat down the lane, startling the shadowy silence with strange savage threats? Who but she came like a young Bacchante, dancing with fury, showing her small white teeth, and apparently dragging her poor victim by one leg, or whirling it cruelly

round her on a string, so that its fluttering wings seemed like her fluttering veil? "Give! *Ai*, followers of Rishâba, give, or I kill! *Ai*, Jain people, give, or I take life!"

Sri Parasnâth put his turbanless bald head with its odd little tuft of a pigtail over the balcony, and, concealing his certainty under a very creditable show of dismay, called down curses solemnly on her head. He would send for the police; he would have her locked up and fined. She might take the bird and kill it before his very eyes if she chose, but he would not pay a *pice* for its freedom. To all of which Kabootri replied with a fresh method of doing the victim to death. She played her part with infinite spirit; but her antagonist was in a hurry to get some orders for Manchester goods off in time for the English mail; so his performance was but half-hearted, and ere she had well begun her list of horrors, the eight-anna bit came clinking down on the brick pavement, and she, as in duty bound, had to squat beside it and loosen the string from the pigeon's leg. As usual she had to drive it from settling on her head or shoulders by wild antics, until it fluttered to a neighbouring roof, where it sidled along the copings with bright eyes watching her, and soft cooings of "*Ka-boo-tri, Ka-boo-tri!*"

Once beyond Jain eyes, she always gave back the call so as to assure herself that no harm had been done. This time by some mischance there happened to be a broken feather in the wing, and her lips set themselves over the task of pulling it out; that being a necessity to even flight. After which, came renewed caresses with a passion in them beyond the occasion; for indeed the passion in Kabootri was altogether beyond the necessities of her life, as yet. True, it was not always such plain sailing

as it had been with Sri Parasnâth. New comers there were, even old customers striving in modern fashion to shake themselves free from such deliberate blackmailing, who needed to be reminded of her methods; methods ending in passionate tears over her own cruelty in the first quiet spot she could reach. But of late years she had grown cunning in the avoidance of irretrievable injury. A dexterous slipping of the cord would leave her captive free, and she herself at liberty to go round to some poultry-seller and borrow a poor fowl under sentence of death, with which she would return to unflinching execution. These things had to be, and her young face would be like a Medea's as she did the deed. But even this was of the past, since folk had begun to recognise the uselessness of driving the girl to extremities. Thus her threat, "I will kill, I will kill!" brought at most but a broken feather in a dove's wing, and a passionate cuddling of the victim to her breast.

This one was interrupted brusquely by a question: "Why did you say hens?" It was Aggie. He happened to live close by in a tumble-down tenement with two square yards of verandah, which were the mainstay of Mrs. Gibbs's position. They, and the necessity for blacking Agamemnon Menelaus's boots when he went to the choir, separated her effectually and irrevocably from her native neighbours. He did not sing now,—his voice had begun to crack—but he looked well in a surplice, and the chaplain knew he would have to pay the monthly stipend in any case. So, this being Friday, Aggie was on his way to evensong, polished boots and all; they were really the strongest barrier between him and the tall girl with her pretty bare feet who stood up to face him, with a soft, perplexed look in the eyes which were so like

his in all but expression, and even that merged into his in its softness and perplexity.

"Because,—because they were hens," she said with an odd little tremble in her voice.

So the two young things stood looking at each other, while the pigeon gurgled and cooed: "*Ka-boo-tri, ka-boo-tri, ka-boo-tri.*"

## II.

"So, see'st thou, Kabootri, thou wilt turn Christian and then I will marry thee." Aggie's outlook on the future went so far and left the rest to Providence; the girl's went further.

"Trra!" she commented. "That is fool's talk. I am a bird-slayer; how could we live without the pigeons and the mosque? Thou hast no money."

They were sitting on the flight of steps once more, with a cage full of scarlet *avitovats* between them, so that the passers-by could not see the hands that were locked in each other behind the cage.

"Then I will marry thee, and become a heathen," amended Agamemnon, giving a squeeze to what he held. She smiled, and the soft curves of her chin seemed to melt into those of her long throat, as she hung her head and looked at him as if he were the most beautiful thing in her world. "That is wiser," she said; "and if thou dost not marry me I will kill myself. So that is settled. He gave another squeeze to her hand, and she smiled again. Then they sat gazing at each other across the *avitovats*, hand in hand like a couple of children; for there was guilelessness in his eyes and innocence in hers.

"Lo!" she said suddenly, "I know not now why I said 'hens.'" She paused, failing to find her own meaning, and so came back to more

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practical matters. "Thou hadst best be buying the birds, Aga-meean,<sup>1</sup> [for so, to suit her estimate of him, she had chosen to amend his name] "or folk will wonder. And if thou wilt leave them in the old place in the Queen's Gardens I will fetch them away, and thou canst buy them of me again next Friday."

There was no cunning in her manner, only a solid grasp on the exigencies of the position. Had he not a mother living in a house with a verandah; and was not her father a bird-seller, who was at that moment betting on the Nawab's coming pigeon-race on the platform above them? Despite these exigencies, however, the past three weeks had been pleasant; if Aggie was still rather hazy as to the difference between young cocks and old hens, it was from no lack of experience in the buying of *avitovats*. Kabootri used to give him the money wherewith to buy them, and leave it again in the hiding-place where she found the birds; so it was not an expensive amusement to either of them. And if Agamemnon Menelaus had not grasped the determination which underlay the girl's threats of taking life, it was from no lack of hearing them, aye, and of shivering at them. The savage, reckless young figure, startling the sunshine and shadow of the narrow lanes with its shrill cry, "I will kill, I will kill, yea, I will take life!" had filled him with a sort of proud bewilderment, a scared admiration. And other things had brought the same dizzy content with them. That same figure, sidling along the rose-red copings like any pigeon, to gain the marble cupolas where the young birds were to be found,—those young birds which must be taught betimes to play her game of Life and Death, as all her world must be

taught to play it—was fascinating. It was disturbing when it sate close to him in the Queen's Gardens, eating rose comfits bought out of the blood-money, and cooing to him like any dove, while the pigeons in the trees above it called *Ka-boo-tri*, *ka-boo-tri*, as if they were jealous.

The outcome of it all, however, was, as yet, no more than the discarding of boots in favour of native shoes, and the supplanting of the gray wideawake by a white and gold saucer-cap which only cost four *annas*, and lay on the dark waves of the lad's small head as if it had been made for it. Kabootri clasped her hands tight in sheer admiration as she watched him go down the steps with the cage of scarlet *avitovats*; but Mrs. Gibbs, while admitting the superlative beauty of the combination, burst into floods of lamentation at the sight, for it was a symptom she had seen often in lads of Aggie's age. His elder brother had begun that way; that elder brother who was now a thorn in the side of every chaplain from Peshawar to Calcutta by reason of his disconcerting desire to live as a heathen and be saved as a Christian.

So, when Aggie, with a spark of unusual spirit, had refused to put on the boots which she had made the servant black with the greatest care, for, of course, there had to be a servant in a house with a verandah; in other words, when he had refused to go to church, since native shoes and a Delhi cap are manifestly incompatible with a surplice, she went over to a bosom friend and wept again. But Mrs. Rosario was of a different type altogether. She seldom wept, taking life with a pure philosophy, and making her living out of her handsome daughters by marrying them off to the first comer on the chance of his doing well.

"There is no need to cry," she said

<sup>1</sup> *Aga*, noble; *Meean*, prince.

comfortably. "Your boy is no worse than all boys. If they do not get on a place or get married they fall into mischief. God made them so, and we must bow to His will, as we are Christians and not heathen. And girls are like that too. If they do not get married they will give trouble. So, if you ask my advice, I say that if you cannot get your poor boy on a place you had better get him a wife, or the bad black women in the bazaar will lead him to bad ways; for he is a handsome boy, almost as handsome as my Lily. He is too young, perhaps, and she is too young too, but if you like he can beau my Lily. You can ask some one for clothes, and then he can beau Lily to the choir. And give a little hop in your place, Mrs. Gibbs. When my girls try me I give hops. It makes them all right, and your boy will be all right too. You live too quiet, Mrs. Gibbs, for young folk; they will have some pleasure. So get your son nice new clothes, and I will give a hop at my place, and send my cook to help yours."

This solid sense caused Mrs. Gibbs to lie in wait for the chaplain in his verandah, armed with a coarse cotton handkerchief soaked in patchouli, and an assertion that Aggie's absence from the choir was due to unsuitable clothes. And both tears and scent being unbearable, she went back with quite a large bundle of garments which had belonged to a merry English boy who had come out to join his parents, only to die of enteric fever. "Give them away in charity, my dear," the father had said in a hard voice; "the boy would have liked it best himself." So the mother, with hopeless tears over the scarce-worn things, had sent them over to the chaplain for his poor.

Thus it happened that before Kabootri had recovered from her intense delight at the cap, Mrs. Gibbs was

laying out a beautiful suit, cut in the latest fashion, to await Aggie's return from one of those absences which had become so alarmingly frequent. There was a brand-new red tie, also a pair of lavender gloves, striped socks, and patent-leather pumps. To crown all, there was a note on highly-scented paper with an L on it in lilies of the valley, in which Mrs. Rosario and her daughters requested the pleasure of Mr. Agamemnon Menelaus Gibbs's company at a hop that evening. What more could a young man like Aggie want for his regeneration? Nothing apparently; it was impossible, for instance, to think of sitting on the steps with Kabootri in a suit made by an English tailor, a tall hat, and a pair of lavender kid gloves. Yet the fine feathers had to be worn when, in obedience to the R.S.V.P. in the corner of the scented note, he had to take over a reply in which Mr. Agamemnon Menelaus Gibbs accepted with pleasure, &c., &c.

"Oh, mamma!" said Miss Lily, who received the note in person with a giggle of admiration. "I do like him; he is quite the gentleman." The remark, being made before its object had left the tiny courtyard, which the Rosarios dignified by the name of compound, was quite audible, and a shy smile of conscious vanity overspread the lad's handsome face.

About the same time, that is to say when the sinking sun, still gloriously bright, had hidden itself behind the vast pile of the mosque so that it stood out in pale purple shadow against a background of sheer sunlight, Kabootri was curled up on a cornice with her back to one of the carved pilasters of a cupola, dreaming idly of Aga-Meean in his white and gold cap. He had not been to the steps that day, so from her airy perch she was keeping a watch for him; and as she watched, her clasped hands

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she was caressing tightened unconsciously, till with a croon and a flutter it struggled for freedom. The sound brought other wings to wheel round the girl expectantly, for it was near the time for the birds' evening meal. Sharâfat-Nissa, the old canoness who lived on the roof below the marble cupolas, had charge of the store of grain set apart for the purpose by the guardians of the mosque; but as a rule Kabootri fed the pigeons. She did many such an odd job for the queer little cripple, half pensioner, half saint, who kept a Koran class for poor girls and combined it with a sort of matrimonial agency; for the due providing of suitable husbands to girls who have no relations to see after such things is a meritorious act of piety; a lucrative one also, when, as in Sharâfat-Nissa's case, you belong to a good family, and have a large connection in houses where a good-looking maiden is always in request as an extra wife. So, as she taught the Holy Book, her keen little eyes were always on the alert for a possible bride. They had been on Kabootri for a long time; hitherto, however, that idle, disreputable father down stairs had managed to evade the old canoness. But now that the great pigeon-race of the year was being decided on the grassy plain between the mosque and the fort, his last excuse would be gone; for he had all but promised that, if he lost, Sharâfat-Nissa should arrange the sale of the girl into some rich house, while if he won he had promised himself to give Kabootri, who in his way he really liked, a strapping young husband fit to please any girl; one who, being of her own caste, would allow her the freedom which she loved even as the birds loved it.

She, however, knew nothing of this compact. So when the great shout telling of victory went up from the

packed multitude on the plain, she only wondered with a smile if her father would be swaggering about with money to jingle in his pocket, or if she would have to cry, "I will kill, I will kill," a little oftener than usual. Sharâfat-Nissa heard the shout also, and, as she rocked backwards and forwards over her evening chant of the Holy Book, gave a covetous upward glance at the slender figure she could just see among the wings of the doves. Down-stairs among the packed multitudes, the shout which told him of defeat made the bird-catcher also, reprobate as he was, look up swiftly to the great gateway which was fast deepening to purple as the sun behind it dipped closer to the horizon; for one could always tell where Kabootri was by the wheeling wings.

"Have a care!" he said fiercely to the discreetly-veiled figure that evening as it sate behind the narrow slit of a door blocking the narrow stair, which Kabootri trod so often on her way to and from the roof. "Have a care, sister! She is not easily limed or netted." A sort of giggle came from the veil. "Yea, brother! Girls are all so, but if the cage is gilt—"

It was just a week after this, and the sunlight behind the shadow of the mosque was revelling in the sheeny iridescence of her tattered silk bodice, that Kabootri's figure showed clear and defiant against the sky, as she stood on the uppermost, outermost coping of the gateway. There was a sheer fall beneath her to the platform below. She had just escaped from the room where she had been caged like any bird for three whole days, and the canoness on the roof below was looking up at her prisoner helplessly.

"Listen, my pigeon, my beloved!" she wheedled breathlessly. "Come down, and let us talk it over together."

"Open the door, I say," came the shrill young voice. "Open, or I kill myself! Open, or I kill!"

"Heart's blood, listen! He shall be a young man, a handsome man."

Handsome, young! Was not Aga-Meean young? Was he not handsome? The thought made her voice shriller, clearer. "Open the door, or I kill! Open, or I take life!" The words were the words of the young tiger-cat that had been wont to startle the sunshine and the shade, making Sri Parasnâth seek his cash-box incontinently; but there was a new note of appeal in their determination; for if it was but three days since she had been caged, it was six since she had seen Aga-Meean. What had become of him? Had he sought and missed her? Had he not?

"Listen, my bird," came the wheedling voice; "come down and listen. Kabootri! I swear that if thou likest not this one, I will let thee go and seek another. I swear it, child."

The sidling feet edged nearer along the coping, for this respite would at least give time. "Swear it on the Holy Book. So—in thy right hand and in thy left. Let me see it." She stretched her own hands out over the depths, and at the sight the expectant pigeons came wheeling round her.

"I swear by God and His prophet," began the old canoness gabbling as fast as she could over the oath; but above her breathless mumble came a little shriek, a little giggle, and a girl's voice from below. "Ah, Mr.

Gibbs! You are so naughty, so very naughty!"

Kabootri could not understand the words, but the giggle belongs to all tongues, and it jarred upon her passion, her despair. She looked down, and saw a well-known figure, changed utterly by a familiar, yet unfamiliar, dress. She saw two girls about her own age, with tiny waists, huge sleeves, and hats. It was Aga-Meean, escorting the two Miss Rosarios, who had expressed a desire to see the mosque. And she saw something else; she saw the look which the prettiest of the two girls gave to Aga-Meean; she saw the look he gave in return. Her sidling feet paused; she swayed giddily.

"Kabootri! Kabootri!" called the woman on the roof, eagerly, anxiously, "I have sworn it. Come down, my pigeon; come down, my dove! It makes me dizzy."

So that was Aga-Meean! The mistress said sooth; the wings made one dizzy, the wings,—the wings of a dove.

She had them! For the wind caught the wide folds of her veil, and claimed a place in the wide, fluttering sheen of her bodice, as she fell, and fell, and fell, down from the marble cupolas, past the purple shadow of the great gateway, to the wide platform where the doves are bought and sold. And some of the pigeons followed her, and some sate sidling on the coping, calling *Ka-boo-tri, ka-boo-tri!* But those of them who knew her best fled affrighted into the golden halo of sunshine behind the rose-red pile.

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## BRITISH GUIANA.

BRITISH GUIANA ! Where is it, and what is it like ? This is a question with which few troubled themselves until the newspapers, in accents of astonishment and dread, told of the possibility of war between Great Britain and the United States. That possibility has not yet been wholly removed. The political situation, so far as the Press and the public can know, remains as it was when despatches were first exchanged between Lord Salisbury and Mr. Olney, and when the Presidential message was delivered. The publication of the DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF BOUNDARY BETWEEN BRITISH GUIANA AND VENEZUELA, as the Blue Book is officially styled, is purely a statement of the British case. As such it may help the United States to understand what the British claim is, and upon what historical and other evidence it is based ; but of itself, it makes no change in the actual position of affairs. When it is exactly known what course the negotiations have taken since President Cleveland launched his bolt against this country, comment upon the issues of diplomacy may be useful. At the present time, however, words on these issues could be only of the order that darkens counsel and embitters controversy. This article, therefore, will ignore politics so far as may be, and, in its general scope, will be limited to a statement of facts about Guiana and its inhabitants, written from the standpoint of one who is not unfamiliar with the country and its resources.

The early history of Guiana is enshrouded in obscurity, and is a theme upon which much learning might be expended and many ingenious, and wholly unwarrantable, conclusions drawn. It is not even certainly known with whom the honour of discovery rests ; but the balance of probability seems to give it to Alonso de Ojeda, who, in company with Americus Vesputius, landed somewhere on the coast of Surinam, or Dutch Guiana, in the summer of 1499. It seems at any rate to be certain that the first colonists were Dutchmen. In 1580 a party of Zealanders effected a settlement near the Pomeroon, and shortly afterwards on the banks of the Essequibo. The English did not make their way there till fifteen years later, when Raleigh led his first expedition to the Orinoco. Hume characterised his charming narrative as full of the grossest and most palpable lies ; but in describing what he saw, as distinct from what he heard, Raleigh told no lies. His geographical and other observations have been amply borne out by subsequent travellers, and the gold that is now being found in the region to some extent, at least, justifies his glowing belief in the richness of the country. His idea, the reader will remember, was that Elizabeth should take possession of the whole of Guiana, should become mistress of the entire region between the Orinoco and the Amazon ; but the great Queen let the opportunity pass, and the Empire of Guiana was not added to her dominions. Raleigh's second voyage, in 1617, ended disastrously on the scaffold

in Palace Yard. With his death England's association with Guiana came to an end, not to be renewed, and then only as an incidental consequence of European wars, until 1781, save for a small settlement established by Lord Willoughby, in the reign of Charles the Second, at Surinam, which was bought back by the Crown and given to the Dutch in exchange for what is now the State of New York. From 1580, however, the time of the first Dutch settlement on the Pomeeroon, until 1781, the Zeelanders established small colonies along the rivers which break the coast line of what is now British, Dutch, and French Guiana, and ascended the highways into the interior. Two facts as regards the section of Guiana which is now British are quite clear. These are, that the Dutch held a mart for slaves at the mouth of the Orinoco, at Barima Point; and that they penetrated into the basin of the Cuyuni River in the north-west, for the sites of their forts may still be seen. In 1781 Great Britain took possession of all the Dutch colonies in the West Indies and on the mainland of South America, but restored them at the Peace of Versailles two years later. Henceforward up to 1803 Guiana was in a perpetual state of transition, now Dutch, now French, now English, and never long under either flag. But when the great war broke out in 1803 the Dutch ceded the three counties of Berbice, Demerara, and Essequibo to the British, in whose hands they have since remained, the last transfer being finally ratified by the treaty with Holland in 1814. The practical result of all these wars and treaties has been that the country now is, and has been during this century, held in three sections,—British Guiana from the Orinoco to the Corentyn, Dutch Guiana from the Corentyn to the Mariwini, and French Guiana from the Mariwini

to the debateable land where Captain Lunier was shot down last year when sent to restore order among the Brazilian desperadoes who follow the leadership of Cabral. Mention of this last circumstance reminds us of the fact that France has a boundary dispute with Brazil, closely analogous to that of Great Britain with Venezuela; a dispute, too, in which the Monroe doctrine, as it appears to be understood by President Cleveland, is equally at stake. But that is not a matter which can now be discussed. In concluding this brief historical summary two points should be particularly remembered: first, that when Great Britain finally took over the three counties of Berbice, Demerara, and Essequibo, she necessarily acquired all the country which the Dutch held; and secondly, that as the Republic of Venezuela did not come into existence until 1836 (that at least was the year of its diplomatic recognition by Great Britain), the British title to the area in dispute is long antecedent to any advanced by Venezuela. Venezuela's claim is only tenable on the assumption that the successful rebels were the inheritors of what Spain had possessed, and not merely of the territory which the rebels then actually commanded by occupation. Now, as to how far Spain had possessed land lower down the shoulder of South America than the Orinoco, and as to how far the Dutch had pushed their way north-westward to the Orinoco, are matters of fact too complex for brief elucidation. The curious reader cannot do better than study them, and the accompanying maps, in the aforesaid Blue Book.

Guiana is a country of mountain and valley, of rolling downs and limitless savannahs, of broad belts of primeval forest, of noble rivers and innumerable rivulets and creeks, the interior sparsely inhabited by nomadic

and peaceful tribes of red men now fast becoming extinct. That part of the country which has been in British possession since the final surrender by the Dutch lies between the Orinoco and the Corentyn, the latter being the boundary of Surinam, or Dutch Guiana. Its extreme north-westerly limit starts at a point at the mouth of the Orinoco, strikes southward along the course of the Amacura, then in a north-westerly direction runs parallel with the Orinoco, leaving a wide belt between it and the river-bank. Before it strikes the Caroni, which flows into the Orinoco, the line makes a sharp bend southward until it reaches a range of mountains culminating in the famous Roraima. Thence it follows the river Cotinga and Takuta until it takes in the head-waters of the Essequibo; this done, an eastward line to the head-waters of the Corentyn concludes the interior boundary. The line thus traced from the British frontier station at the mouth of the Orinoco to the Roraima range represents the extreme limit of the British claim. The true limit (what Lord Salisbury calls the "irreducible minimum") follows the Amacura river and the Imataka range until it strikes the Cuyuni, thence following the course of that river and the Yuruan until it touches the range which ends in Mount Roraima. A large pear-shaped area is thus left between the irreducible minimum and the extreme British claim; and this is the area which the British Government admits is so far open to dispute that it may fairly form the subject of arbitration. It is the area within the irreducible minimum, or the Schomburgk line, which Lord Salisbury has so far declined to submit to arbitration, for the reasons set forth in his second despatch to Mr. Olney. Now the Venezuela claim follows the coast from the mouth of the Orinoco to

Cape Nassau, creeps behind the settled districts unquestionably cultivated by the Dutch as far back as the end of the sixteenth century, and thence marches with the Essequibo to its source. This claim, if held to be good, would deprive British Guiana of more than two-thirds of its area, and would reduce the colony to a relatively insignificant strip between the rivers Essequibo and Corentyn. The country within the line of the irreducible minimum, and excluding the pear-shaped tract with respect to which Great Britain is alone willing to arbitrate, is, roughly, as large as Great Britain and Ireland. It will thus be seen that Venezuela claims not only the pear-shaped tract but the area as large as Great Britain, leaving us a strip no larger than Ireland. This explanation will reveal the real magnitude of the issues at stake. From the point of view of the United States, assuming that the Presidential message implies a belief in the validity of the Venezuelan claim, it seems that Great Britain has extended her dominion in South America by an area as large as herself. And from the British point of view it seems that the United States are siding with Venezuela in seeking to deprive Great Britain, not only of the pear-shaped tract which she is willing to throw into the crucible of arbitration, but of the largest and richest part of her colony. Now if, on the one hand, there is any virtue in the new reading of the Monroe doctrine, and if, on the other, Great Britain is determined to maintain the integrity of her Empire and not to allow the dismemberment of Guiana in the interest of the neighbouring State of Venezuela, it will be obvious that the political situation is one of great difficulty and danger. At present, however, it would be unwise to say more than that. In the absence of definite informa-

tion as to the course of negotiations, and in obedience to the strong desire expressed by Government that nothing should be written calculated to revive the feeling of hostility in the United States, it is not permissible to do more than express a hope that the diplomatists will find a means of settlement which will leave British Guiana intact, at least as to the whole of the territory within the irreducible minimum.

The country is roughly divisible into three zones. First comes the level mud flat, twenty miles or more in width, formed by the soil brought down from the great rivers and edged with a thick belt of tall *courida* bush and mangrove. This belt is the natural sea-wall of the country. It extends in almost unbroken line from the Amazon to the Orinoco, and against its matted frontage the Atlantic rollers are beaten into foam and spray. Beyond the mud flats are long, low, irregular reefs of white quartz sand, sometimes rising into hillocks of from fifty to eighty feet high. These formed the original coast-line. The intervening stretch of rich black soil, sand and clay and vegetable deposit brought down by the rivers, represents the encroachment of the earth upon the sea. The process goes on incessantly. The rivers are so surcharged with alluvial that the sea for fifty miles from the coast is dark and turbid; and as the alluvial settles and the mud banks are extended, so the *courida* bush moves forward, ever reclaiming the new foreshore and waging war with the incoming tide. Now and again, in times of gale, the rollers tear up the matted roots and make a great gap in the natural fascines; but, though there may be isolated defeats, the general tendency is that of victory for the land. Thus have the mud flats been formed, the deposit a hundred feet or more in thick-

ness; a wondrously rich soil for the sugar-cane, a poor foundation for heavy buildings, but a perfect buffer during seismological disturbances. Beyond the sand-reefs come the formations of primary and metamorphic rocks, granitic rocks and ranges of sandstone mountains, rising by terraces into an elevated tableland of savannah. Where the mud flats end the great belts of forest begin, stretching for a hundred and fifty miles or more inland and forming towering walls of timber and foliage along the great waterways. The river system is on the grand scale peculiar to tropical America. The country, in fact, is cut up into innumerable islets grouped about the courses of the largest streams, the Essequibo, the Demerara, the Berbice, and the Corentyn. The finest river is the Essequibo, into which flow the magnificent waters of the Cuyuni and the Mazaruni, forming a confluence at Bartica Point over four miles broad, the stream then widening out through its subsequent course of sixty miles into an estuary twenty miles from bank to bank. The Essequibo rises in the Acaroi mountains, forty miles north of the Equator, and tears a sinuous way through and down the terraced surface for a distance of over six hundred miles. It is not navigable for steamers much beyond Bartica Point, and the farther it is explored the higher, grander, more beautiful, and more dangerous become the rapids. One of its tributaries, the Potaro, which joins it about one hundred and fifty miles from the coast, has a waterfall surpassing Niagara in height. This is the Kaieteur Fall (the Old Man's Fall, to translate the Indian name), which was discovered by Mr. Brown, who made a geological survey for the Government a quarter of a century ago. At this point the Potaro falls over a sandstone tableland pre-

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eripitously for seven hundred and forty-one feet, and then over a sloping cataract of eighty-one feet into a great rocky basin. In flood-time the width of the fall is about three hundred and seventy feet, and in the dry season two hundred and forty feet or less. "If," says Mr. im Thurn, "the whole valley of the Potaro is fairyland, then the Kaieteur ravine is the very penetralia of fairyland. . . . Crossing the savannah we soon reached the Kaieteur cliffs. Lying at full length on the ground, head over the edge of the cliff, I gazed down. Then, and then only, the splendid and, in the most solemn sense of the word, awful beauty of the Kaieteur burst upon me. Seven hundred and fifty feet below, encircled in black boulders, lay a black pool into which the column of white water, graceful as the ceaseless flight of innumerable rockets, thundered from by my side. Behind the Fall, through the thinnest parts of the veil of foam and mist, a great black cavern made the white of the water still more white." The renowned traveller saw it some years afterwards and in time of flood. An indescribably vast curtain of waters, he says (some four hundred feet wide), "rolled over the top of the cliff, retaining its full width until it crashed into the boiling water of the pool which filled the whole space below; and at the surface of this pool itself only the outer edge was visible, for the greater part was beaten and hurled up in a great high mass of surf and foam and spray."<sup>1</sup>

The Berbice comes next in size to the Essequibo; it is tidal, and navigable for vessels of a twelve feet draught to a distance of over a hundred miles. From its source it runs for many leagues almost parallel with the upper Essequibo, now confined between high gorges, now spreading

out into broad expanses, now racing over cataracts as it crosses the great bed of rock that runs athwart the shoulder of the continent. The Demerara divides the section of the country between the Berbice and the Essequibo. It is nearly two miles wide at the mouth, a dark muddy volume of water, running like a millstream as the tide goes out. This river is navigable for large vessels for over seventy miles, and its upper course is scarcely known to any but Indian boatmen and a handful of adventurous miners who have found gold beyond the Mora rapids. The Dutch boundary river, the Corentyn, takes its rise about twenty-five miles east of the headwaters of the Essequibo, and flows over a series of splendid cataracts whose supremacy in point of grandeur and beauty was unchallenged until the discovery of the Kaieteur. It is navigable for about one hundred and fifty miles. Besides these there are the Rupununi, whose white waters thread their way over the elevated tableland and through the vast savannahs, and fall into the Essequibo at a point over two hundred and fifty miles from the sea; the Barima and the Barama, making easily navigable highways from the coast to the north-west; the Pomeroon, the Mahaica, the Mahaicony, and the Abary, all rivers compared with which our island streams are insignificant.

Of the High Woods, the dense primeval forests of tropical America, many, from Humboldt downwards, have written, and written well; yet mere words can never adequately render their grand, mysterious beauty. The brush, in the hand of genius, might succeed; the pen must inevitably fail. It is of little service to tell of giant stems rising to a height of two hundred feet or more before they put forth their strong interlacing branches. The bare statement of the

<sup>1</sup> AMONG THE INDIANS OF GUIANA, by E. F. im Thurn (1893).

fact conveys no idea of the massive nobility, the columnar dignity and grace of their trunks. They shoot straight upwards in grand and crowded array, the pillars of a dense roof of dark green foliage; and from their branches hang festoons of bush rope, in strenuous, though invisible combat, one with the other, to reach the soil, even as the great trees are in similar combat to force their way up into the sunlight and the air. So thickly matted is the roof of branch and leaf, of pendulous rope and ivy, that the light is dim. You may travel for days and never see the sun save for slanting shafts of burnished gold that pierce the interstices of this natural ceiling; or for occasional clearances where some old giant of the forest has fallen, crashing down all the weaker trees that could not withstand its weight. The atmosphere is almost intolerably hot and dank. The ground is encumbered with a dense undergrowth of bush, making progress painfully slow, even over an Indian trail. The silence, too, is as oppressive as the heat. Just before daybreak, in the ten minutes or so of half light, the forest will resound with the cries of monkeys and the notes of birds. As the sun rises over the woodland golden-breasted marmosets will leap from tree to tree; now and again a red-plumaged bird may dart like a flame through the leaves; a labba, a peccarie, a tapir, or possibly a puma, will crash through the undergrowth; but as the day wears on and the heat grows less endurable, these sights and sounds cease. All is still and silent. A large bright-hued butterfly may float lazily past; the solemn note of the bell-bird may echo in the groves; but these rare incidents of the forest noon-day seem but to intensify the motionless character of the scene, and deepen the sense of perfect solitude

and silence. It is much the same when travelling on the rivers and creeks. Rarely does the traveller on these winding streams get a clear stretch in front of him. He is on a wide avenue of water with high forest banks to right and left, with a great wall of trees behind him and another in front, a wall that gives way as the boat approaches the bend, and resolves itself into new forest banks with another wall of trees at the next turn of the stream. Not a sign of life will be seen, not a sound heard but the rhythmic stroke of the paddles. The creeks are of equal stillness and of unsurpassable loveliness, the cool brown waters covered with the queen of water lilies and over-arched with trees, festooned with lianas, creepers, and orchids. Often does a passage have to be forced with cutlasses through these meandering waterways. Every stroke of the paddles gives a new view and reveals a still more entrancing scene. It is toilsome work, no doubt, to get through these arched highways of the forest; but great is the reward to the lover of natural beauty. Splendidly is he compensated for his labour when the boat shoots out from beneath the interlaced roof of foliage and flowers into the sunlight that streams upon a wide lake in the open savannah, fringed by the forest belt, and with mountains mantled in blue haze, softly outlined against the horizon.

And what of the people of this interesting country? They number but two hundred and eighty-seven thousand, an infinitesimal proportion of what the area could support. When the Dutch went there in the sixteenth century, the forests were the home of large tribes of red Indians, who had probably found their way from the northern part of the continent along the chain of islands across the Caribbean sea. Now, however, there

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are scarcely twenty thousand aborigines between the Orinoco and the Corentyn. The Caribs, the only warlike and courageous tribe among them, are practically extinct; the few who remain have lost their love of battle. There is no market for slaves such as that established by the Dutch nearly three hundred years ago on the Orinoco delta; and with the cessation of the trade in Indian labour for the Dutch plantations in the Pomeroon and Essequibo districts, the Caribs found their occupation gone. They have dwindled down to vanishing point. The diminishing tribes that remain are inoffensive, and as shy, too, as the animals whose forest habitation they share. They make magnificent boatmen and woodmen, threading their way through the intricacies of the forest with an ease incomprehensible to the European, a giant tree, a fallen trunk, a broken twig, their only landmarks. And they know the rivers as only the aborigine can know them. From them and from the forest they draw their food. In the woodlands, when they form a settlement, they clear a tiny patch and cultivate cassava, from the root of which they make large, thin cakes, which answer to the white man's bread. The men hunt the labba in the forest, or spear and net fish in the rivers; while the women weave hammocks, tend the cassava field, and make *paiwarrie*, an intoxicant from the fermented juice of the cassava root. The process of manufacture is disgusting, the root being masticated by the women and spat into a large vessel. It is not a strong intoxicant: much has to be drunk before an hilarious effect is produced; but the Indian is capable of taking an unlimited quantity, and still deserves Raleigh's description of him as a "marvellous great drunkard." And since they have been brought into contact with Europeans they have learned the

qualities of more fiery spirits than the cassava root will yield; they have learned some of the white man's tastes, and with them some of his diseases, rapidly hastening their extinction as a race. Many of those who keep to the river banks and about the wood-cutting grants have an admixture of negro blood. They are useful because of their knowledge of the cataracts and Indian trails, and they now find abundant employment as bowmen and boatmen for the gold-hunters. But they are a people who will not continue in the land; they will be merged into the hybrid population of the country. The true Indian will go farther inland before the steady advance of civilisation. He shrinks from European contact, a veritable child of nature, of an impenetrable reserve, full of superstitious dreads, peopling every mountain, river, and forest-grove with spirits, and utterly unable to adapt himself to any conditions other than those of the nomad. Before many generations are passed there will be no other evidence of the Indian occupants of Guiana than the mysterious and indecipherable picture-writing wrought by remote ancestors upon the great boulders of the river cataracts.

The general population of Guiana is indeed a motley gathering; something under five thousand Europeans; about twelve thousand Portuguese from the Cape de Verde Islands and Madeira; over one hundred thousand coolies from India, and nearly four thousand Chinese brought under indenture to work on the sugar-estates; more than one hundred thousand blacks, descendants of West African negroes brought by the slave-traders; and about thirty thousand people of mixed race. The grand total in 1891, including the nomadic Indians, was something over two hundred and eighty-eight thousand. Nearly all

these people are at present confined to the coast. The majority of them are employed on the sugar-estates on the banks of the Demerara and the Berbice, and on the flats near the mouths of the rivers. In "de old Testament time," as the negroes say, (meaning thereby the days of the Dutch possession, or any time before the abolition of slavery) planting was carried on in the interior lands, cotton and coffee heading the list of exports. But when the sugar-cane began to be grown the Dutch colonists found the alluvial an ideal soil for it. A level surface, too, was the natural *habitat* of the Dutchman. He liked it all the better for being a few feet below high tide; it gave him opportunities to exercise his ingenuity in building walls to keep out the sea, in cutting canals, and constructing *kokers* and dams for navigation and drainage. When the British took over the colony they looked upon it simply as a huge sugar-estate, caring nothing for the potentialities of the interior. A sugar-estate was then a gold-mine to its fortunate owner, and to those who managed it for him while he lived at his ease in England. There was no incentive to leave the flats and push beyond the sand-reefs and forest-belt to the mountainous table-land. Cheap labour was the great object always in view, and the colony was for decades governed for the purpose of providing such labour for the planters. On the abolition of slavery the negroes took advantage of their freedom to work when they chose. They had neither the enterprise nor the courage to move into the interior; they squatted contentedly in villages on the mud flats, within reach of the sugar-estates, where they could be sure of getting one or two days' work a week, which brought them in abundance for their simple wants. The planters soon found that this inter-

mittent labour-supply was insufficient. They brought in immigrants from the West India islands, liberated negroes from West Africa and the Brazils, and Chinese coolies from the Far East. This last importation ceased, however, when a stipulation was made in a convention between Great Britain and China, declaring that all such immigrants should be entitled to a return passage at the end of their term of service. The planters thought the burden of cost too heavy, and discontinued the introduction of Chinese; unfortunately so, for the Chinaman is a capital agricultural labourer in the tropics, is a valuable consumer of commodities, and, when free to use his faculties for his own advantage, is a source of wealth to a sparsely inhabited country. With China practically closed to them the planters then turned their eyes upon India, and for nearly a quarter of a century there has been a brisk traffic between Guiana and the East Indies. The coolies sign for five years' service, with the right of claiming a free passage home for themselves and their families then or at any later time. Many remain; but an average of two thousand men, women, and children return yearly, with their accumulated savings in the form of jewellery and gold pieces. The annual cost of this immigration is about £100,000, two-thirds being borne by the planters, and one-third by the colony; and the effect of it has been to keep labour fairly cheap. The policy of the planters also was to confine the negro to the coast, for his superior physical strength made him almost indispensable for certain heavy work in the cane-fields, so long as it could be bought at a low figure; and they accordingly set their faces against all projects for opening the interior which would have taken the population away from the mud flats. That policy has, however, worn

itself out. The rise of the beet-sugar industry in Europe, unfairly fostered by heavy bounties, has made the cultivation of cane so hazardous and unprofitable that it is doubtful whether planting can continue in Demerara. But whether its days be few or many the planter has now a sufficiency of indentured coolie labour; and the rest of the population, the free coolies, the negroes, and the mixed races, find themselves compelled to turn to other pursuits.

Fortunately a new channel has been opened to them by the rediscovery of gold in the interior. "No man in Europe believes in the wealth of Guiana," wrote Humboldt nearly a century ago; but many men believe in it now, in Europe and elsewhere. The initiation came from Cayenne, a black native of French Guiana prospecting in the Essequibo with marked success. In 1884 two hundred and fifty ounces of gold were exported; by 1893 the tale has risen to nearly one hundred and forty-three thousand ounces. There has been a slight decrease since; but fluctuations are inevitable in placer mining, and a trifling fall has no real bearing upon the auriferous nature of the country. All the gold hitherto obtained has been washed from the soil under unskilled management and by labourers who have had to learn their work. The quartz has not yet been touched. Indeed only in a few insignificant patches has the country been prospected. The region between the Essequibo and the Corentyn has scarcely been touched; nearly all the gold has come from the upper reaches of the Barima and from a few spots along the courses of the Cuyuni, the Mazaruni, the Essequibo, and the Potaro. When capital and skilled direction are brought into the country, as they will be so soon as the political difficulty is disposed of and the north-

western boundary definitely fixed, Guiana will probably become one of the most attractive gold-fields in the British Empire. Then the population will inevitably drift inland. Only the mercantile and official classes will remain in Georgetown, the capital; and only the coolies whose labour contracts are unexpired will be left upon the sugar-estates. The population will have to be reinforced with negroes from the West Indies and coolies from the East: townships and farms will spring up in the interior wherever mining settlements are established; and the country will undergo a transformation such as, in due time and granting the continued existence of gold in paying quantities, should make it one of the richest provinces of the Empire. When the drift quartz comes to be crushed, when shafts are sunk in the numerous reefs, when operations are conducted on such a scale as Mr. Chamberlain evidently contemplates by offering concessions of territory on specially favourable terms,<sup>1</sup> then Guiana will be within measurable distance of realising the dreams of Raleigh when he urged Elizabeth to take possession of the whole country between the Amazon and the Orinoco.

Something should be said, in conclusion, about the climate, which has been badly maligned. It is no worse and no better than that of any other primeval tropical tract. Malarial fevers exist, of course: they are inevitable in the tropics; but severe attacks may certainly be avoided by prudent living. If a European, fresh from home, walks about at noonday without an umbrella, or works at a paddle with the Indian boatmen on the rivers, or indulges in other continuous exertion without protection from the sun, the chances are that he

<sup>1</sup> See his despatch of September 7th, 1895, to the then Governor of the Colony.

will get an attack of malarial fever; and he deserves to get it for his folly. But if he takes life easily, has a sufficiency of good nourishing food, and as little alcohol as possible, he may live to a ripe old age with nothing worse than an occasional feverish cold. It is an absolute error to call the country a pestiferous fever-den. The impression has probably arisen from the occasional appearance of yellow fever in an epidemic form. Now yellow fever is a very terrible malady, striking fear to the boldest heart by the rapidity with which it carries off its victims; but it is no more terrible than small-pox, and an epidemic of the disease is about as rare in Guiana as small-pox is in the better quarters of London. It has not been known in the country since 1881, and then it was imported; it appears only at long intervals, and when it does appear is confined to the mouths of the rivers, rarely extending inland. Every one who has been in the interior, and knows how to travel in equatorial regions, testifies to the salubrity of the climate, where the great heat of the sun is tempered by the pleasant and continuous breeze from the sea. No European can, of course, labour in the tropics as he can in his own latitudes. If he attempts to do so nature will chastise him for his temerity by an attack of fever,

which may be so mild as to be almost imperceptible to him, or so frequently recurrent as to ruin his constitution, or so severe as to lay him in his grave in forty-eight hours. But it is not the climate that deserves blame so much as the misuse of it by men whose bodily energy outstrips their discretion, or their knowledge of the laws of health. One great cause of disease is certainly almost wholly avoided in Guiana, save, perhaps, on the higher savannahs; there are no violent alternations of temperature. "There is probably no country on the globe," says Dr. Hancock, who lived in Demerara for five-and-twenty years, "where the temperature is more uniform than in Guiana." The variation of the thermometer is from 72° to 87° (Fahrenheit), and even in the savannahs the thermal range is merely from 66° at night to 88° in the day. The annual rainfall varies from seventy to one hundred and thirty inches, and in the wet season it will, as in all tropical countries, rain sometimes for days together. But wet or dry, fever or no fever, the climate of Guiana is delightful. It is one to which all who have ever known it long at times to return, and with a longing that is irresistible when the great cities of England are enveloped in the poisonous fogs of winter.

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